

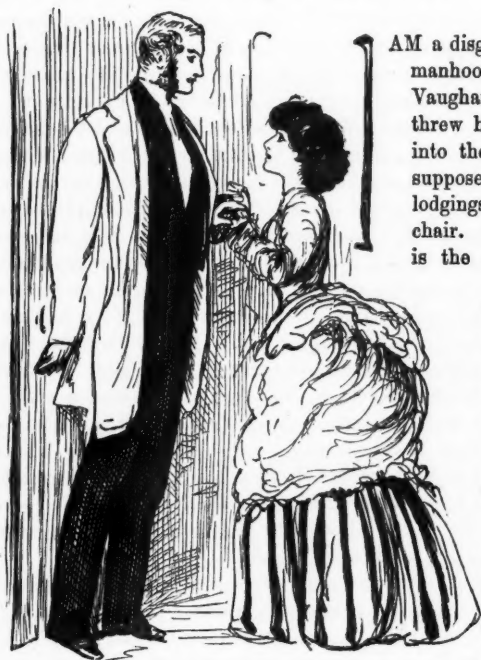
THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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Zelda's Fortune.

CHAPTER IX.

A MAN WITHOUT A WILL.



AM a disgrace to the name of manhood," thought Harold Vaughan to himself, as he threw himself after the play into the piece of furniture supposed, in his comfortless lodgings, to represent an easy-chair. "I wonder if mine is the ordinary history of what guide-books to success call Self-made men? I could, I honestly believe, have made myself in time the managing assistant to a druggist—perhaps even the partner of one who did not want me to invest capital. That would have been something for a workhouse boy to be proud of: the

result of my own industry and of my own will. But neither my industry nor my will made a schoolboy carry his gun at full cock through a bramble

hedge: luck made me a physician—I steadily set to work to make myself a professional failure. I succeeded: and the worst of it is, I know that if my career were to begin over again I should again succeed in failing in exactly the same way. And then—just when I was about to reap the due reward of my pains, comes in Luck once more to say, ‘It is no use; you *shall* be called a Self-made man. I will send you on an expedition from which the worst you can earn is the immortal fame of a martyr to science, when in truth you are but a cowardly impostor, running away from Love and Hunger.’ I shall be called a self-made hero; I am a self-made ass, whom Fate has determined to dress up in a lion’s skin. I think I can see my biography as it will read in some foolish book written to encourage the young. ‘This pioneer of science,’ it will say, ‘raised himself by his brilliant talents, his genius and industry, from a parish apprentice to a physician in practice at St. Bavons before he was thirty years old. But the extraordinary enthusiasm for science which carried him thus far forbade him to confine his energies within the narrow limits of a provincial town. He gave up his practice, and volunteered his services as physician and naturalist to a private expedition in search of the North Pole. On his return’—people do return sometimes—then, of course, follow the consequences of having a warm-hearted and thorough-going Earl for one’s friend and patron. Or else it will go, ‘The expedition was never heard of again—and the name of Harold Vaughan, the work-house boy, will go down to posterity with Lord Lisburn’s own. England will not forget one who shared the fate of a peer.’ Rubbish! I have a good mind to write my own memoir before I go. ‘This atom of human sea-weed was picked up among the hedge-rows. If he had been apprenticed to a cobbler he would have picked up a little cobbling—apprenticed to a surgeon he picked up a little surgery. A short-sighted nobleman having, out of exaggerated charity and gratitude, given him an education, and his poverty and position being such as to keep him out of dissipation, he would have been an idiot if he had not passed his examinations for his medical degrees. He was driven from St. Bavons for daring to ask a tradesman’s daughter to marry him. Finding the world too strong for him before he was thirty, he joined a crack-brained search for the earth’s axis under a hare-brained boy, in order to get ship-biscuit to eat and to escape from a couple of grey eyes. Then, either, as he deserved, he was never heard of again, or else he was accepted into the noble army of lucky waifs and self-made impostors.’ Well—so be it; only I should like to know how many men look down with wonder at their biographies as they are read by the world.

“But, in the name of common sense, why should I let Luck conquer me? why should I submit to be a coward for the sake of being a charlatan? What, in all this world of lies, is Claudia Brandt or Claudia anybody to the man, and not to the bit of floating sea-drift, called Harold Vaughan? I am a man, I suppose—they would say so if I were laid out on a dissecting-table at Guy’s. If there were no Claudia in the world, I should

no more dream of sailing to the North Pole than I should of giving myself a certificate for Bedlam. Luck shall not make me either lion or martyr. I will make it my ambition to justify the kindness of my first patron—I will pay my debt of gratitude—I will stick to medicine as a duty, and fail or prosper, simply as I may deserve.

"Ass that I am! What right have I to talk about staying in England—can I make no resolve, not even a mad one, without breaking it the moment it is made? What should I say of a man who made up his mind, and volunteered too, to take part in danger abroad, and within ten minutes of seeing a girl's face, began to think it his duty to stay at home? I think it is my duty—but then everybody thinks his inclination his duty. This is what comes of trying to follow out *gnothi seauton*, I suppose. If I were like Lord Lisburn, I should just do what I was inclined to, without thinking, and feel that I was acting from a high sense of duty all the time. Let me see—what cut and dried philosopher was it who said, If you ever doubt which of two courses you ought to take, follow the most unpleasant, and then you will be sure that you are acting from a sense of duty? Well, the most unpleasant will certainly be to remain at home. Lord Lisburn will set me down as a coward and a cur; I shall find it hard to earn bread; I shall perhaps be falling again into the toils; I shall despise myself as much as if I sailed, and feel that some contemptible part of me was being gratified by the surrender of my self respect. Well then—here goes *gnothi seauton* to the winds. I will be free—I will follow my inclination like other men. I will run away like a coward to prevent being called one, and let myself drift into being a martyr or a hero. Whatever happens, I must be contemptible. So, though I must despise myself, I will at least give others no cause to despise me. There—I have given Her the last thought she will ever have from me. And henceforth, if Fate denies me the power of doing as I ought, she shall at least not rob me of the power of doing as I please."

He lighted a cigar which Lord Lisburn had given him at parting, threw up the window and looked out into the narrow street, along which a drunken half-dozen of men and women were reeling noisily, while a policeman watched them idly from the kerb-stone. In the window opposite, which had no blind, he could see the framed picture of a figure bending over a sick bed; the flame of a tallow-candle was reflected from a druggist's glass phial. He might be assisting at a scene of murder, for aught he knew, or merely at a common sick-room scene. The other windows were all dark and asleep but one; there, on the blind, he could see a shadow moving a needle or a pen. His eyes were always quick to judge, and he was in a mood to catch the physiognomy of shadows. It is just on these occasions, when the world seems to limp with ourselves, that the limping devil Azamat, whom Aaron Goldrick invoked as Benguilango, permits us a glimpse at the internal economy of the world. And the glimpse he affords us is almost sure to be untrue; as untrue as the idea of a steam-engine obtained by one who forgets that every wheel and piston has

qualities of its own, such as liability to rust, to slip, to become loose, and to break, altogether independent of the general object and action of the machine. The little movements of human mechanism which Dr. Vaughan regarded coldly and contemptuously from his window, made any exercise of conscious self-will on his own part appear infinitesimally foolish and small. It could not be that one man chose deliberately to shout rather than be silent, that another chose to weep rather than to laugh, another to toil rather than to sleep; and as these were all great things to them, why should he think himself bound to assert impossible self-mastery in greater things?

So letting his eye travel along the curve of Ursa Major and upwards, until it reached the Pole star, Harold Vaughan allowed his chance view of the heavens to serve for *sortes*. He possessed neither a Virgil nor a Bible, the usual resources of those who wish to cry heads or tails with Fate; but, as a sceptic, he had his share of superstition, and as an unbeliever in himself, he was in a superstitious mood.

Cynosura looked as cold and fixed as Fate, and as high up above the other stars. One need not be an astrologer to feel that the stars, being beyond the reach of our wills, are stronger than we, while to have strength and not to use it is, to our human instincts, a contradiction in terms.

"So be it then," he thought to himself once more. "I am most assuredly not of iron, and yet I cannot lift my eyes without their being drawn to the Pole. Chance must decide my life for me, it seems—so let me own myself beaten, and give in. I will go to bed and dream my last dream, and to-morrow I will——"

"I will," indeed! It is not allowed the slave of Circumstance even to whisper "I will"—not even so much as "I will obey." Passive obedience or active war—there is no middle way. And the words were hardly out of his mind's lips, when they were broken short by a thundering at the street door.

His window was alight, and caught the eye of Fortune's messenger.

"Halloa there!" called out the latter, "I want Dr. Vaughan."

"I am Doctor Vaughan. What is it? From Lord Lisburn? Are you Carol?"

"Come down then—at once. Bring your instruments—everything you've got. Come—don't stand talking there." And he began to thunder again.

"I'm coming—but you needn't knock the house down. Now, what is it?" he asked, as he opened the street door.

"It's the devil, that's all. Aaron has stabbed Lord Lisburn——"

"Good God!"

"As dead as Queen Elizabeth. What in the world's to be done? I shall have to be examined at the inquest—the trial, any way—what do you think they'll do? You must certify it's a fit—small-pox—lumbago—anything. Aaron, confound the fool, can have gone into the country.

As for the Oberon—that game's up, anyhow. That's what comes of having to do with fools."

"I shall certify what I find," said Harold, dragging Carol along. When called out of his dreams by the necessity of action, his will was not to be despised. "And I think for your sake you had better hold your tongue before me till you have done trembling. Did you come to me immediately?"

"The moment the young fellow tumbled over."

"He stabbed him—where?"

"Here—in the side."

"Are you sure?"

"Certain."

"Then it mayn't be too late now—I may save him again. But if he is dead—if he has been murdered—I shall not be your accomplice, Mr. Carol, or of any of your friends. If Aaron is your friend, Lord Lisburn is mine. Ah, thank God, there's a cab at last—in with you. What—you'd rather walk? You'll do no such thing."

"I will, though. I always have my way, and I'll have it now."

"By all means—but you'll go mine. There—and now drive like mad; a sovereign for every minute that you're short of ten."

Off like mad they drove; it was a real race between the chariot of death and the cab of the man without a will.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER THE PLAY.

THE next morning must have been very loth to enter through the yet open window in Golden Square.

The supper-table still bore its mangled load, and was stained with a hideous mixture of red blood and red wine. The furniture was thrown about in a confusion not to be accounted for by the battle of the chairs—only, as everybody knows, chairs and tables always throw themselves about without the aid of hands wherever there is human disorder. Their perverse vitality is one of the most difficult problems for housewives, and one of the most difficult speculations for students of occult sympathies. One chair indeed had been thrown over in the short scuffle, but all lay overthrown in every part of the floor, which was farther bewildered with broken glasses and empty bottles. There was never, at the most orderly of times, room for a visitor to put down a hat comfortably, as Mr. Abner had found; but now, to find so much as a place for a pair of gloves would have been hard. And above the whole *débris*, among which a pair of candles still guttered, hung a cloud composed of damp London mist and the stale smoke of the night before. No wonder the morning looked coldly and sullenly into such a villanous corner, from

which the night utterly refused to be driven. Rooms have their "next mornings," even worse than those who use them.

It was a sitting-room, not a bed-room: that was nothing. But it would not have served as a bed-room for a hog, much less for a man, much less for a woman. And yet it was upon the form of a girl that the eyes of Harold Vaughan first fell when he opened one of the folding doors leading from the next room: not stretched out upon the sofa, as though trying to make the best of her discomfort, but sleeping half upright, and with her bare shoulders in the full draught, as though sleep had claimed her unsought and undesired.

Harold Vaughan had only seen *Mdlle. Leczinska* on the stage: indeed the idea of an actress in any shape off the stage had never suggested itself to him, any more than the idea of a marionette shut up in its box and unfastened from its wires. Though he had not confessed it to Lord Lisburn or to Carol, the number of his visits to any theatre during his solitary and unsocial student days he could have counted easily on the fingers of a single hand. He and the aimless stroller belonged not merely to two different worlds, but to two different elements: they had as little in common between them as the sylph and the gnome. His brain was clear, for he had been forced to concentrate all his faculties upon a single point for many hours, and he was no longer in a dream, but even painfully awake; so he stood and looked at this new specimen of humanity as it lay unconscious before him, as though at a mummy in a museum, or some abnormal subject brought into the dissecting-room. The sight was not in any way agreeable. The remains of rouge and pearl powder were still on her face in flakes and patches; the circles of her eyes looked bruised, and the natural complexion, seen here and there through the paint, sallow and haggard. Her hair was all tossed about and her dress out of all form, while her jewels looked like tinsel in the miserable half-light, as if turning the tables upon the tinsel that looks like jewellery on the stage.

Dr. Vaughan was far too unimaginative to be easily moved by things that his mind did not understand. He had never been in full sympathy with anybody but Harold Vaughan since his workhouse days, and doubtless that was one great reason for his having been caught by the first sympathetic woman with whom it had been his fate to exchange a glance or a word. But the sight before him was enough to strike sparks out of the most flinty skull. Nobody can help thinking and speculating when brought in direct contact with those whose real lives are mock lives, and who are nothing when they are not trying to be something utterly different from themselves. Only an actor could have said in his heart that all the world is a stage, for there is an essential difference between the two things. On the stage, everybody is trying to be some one else, in the world everybody is trying hard to be himself; and the only real likeness between them is that in most cases everybody tries equally in vain.

The Doctor was clearly one of the failures off the stage; he had tried wholly in vain to be and to assert himself, and had failed ignominiously.

So he looked with additional curiosity at one who had, to all appearance, triumphantly succeeded in the opposite direction. His chief feeling was one of contemptuous disgust that this girl, in whom he, of course, assumed everything contemptible, should have become even the heroine of an hour because she could successfully pretend to be some creature of somebody else's fancy, while he was not allowed, by a thousand petty circumstances, to be his true self, and, at the same time, could not see his way to obtain any credit for being unable to pretend. Between these two stools he, the one waif, was likely to settle down into nothingness, while she, the other waif, had her ample place in the world because it was her profession to be a mere toy. He knew nothing of the atmosphere of sentiment which has grown up round the artist life in the course of ages, so the contrast between the Mdle. Leczinska of the Oberon and Mdle. Leczinska of Golden Square carried no romantic suggestions to him. He could find no imaginary beauty in what was not beautiful of itself to be dignified with the idea of genius *déshabillé*. On the contrary, he wondered that the thing he looked upon could under any circumstances have power to charm, and felt superior to the rest of the world in not having been carried away. What else he thought of a girl whom he found under such conditions is what would have been thought by ninety-nine women out of a hundred, and by nine men out of ten. He was by no means the first who, having himself unjustly suffered from evil thinking, has set himself to judge others in his own turn, and to imitate his judges in assuming the worst simply because the worst was what he saw. Harold Vaughan had even quicker eyes than Mr. Brandt, and accordingly trusted them still more implicitly.

But he was a physician as well as a fool—supposing a very natural exercise of human reason to be folly—and he distrusted the effects of open windows as much as he trusted in the infallibility of his own eyes. So he went to the window and shut it gently, not because he was in the least inclined to be tender towards the actress whose quarrel had brought his friend to death's door, but simply from a professional habit of humanity. He did not even look to see whether the slight noise woke her, or if she still slept on. He also drew down the blind, to shut out the raw light that jarred upon his own nerves, poured himself out a glass of wine, which he wanted, and then, having looked once more through the folding doors, sat down to make such notes as the circumstances might require. Still the girl neither woke nor moved. Except for the quiet regularity of her breathing, she might be dead for anything he knew or cared.

So he sat for at least a full hour, sometimes scribbling, sometimes thinking, and every now and then looking quietly through the folding doors, which he always left ajar, so that the least sound might be heard. Suddenly, however, when he was most deeply absorbed, he heard a slight rustle, and, looking up, saw the girl's figure move. He looked, and in another second she started bolt upright, seemed to force her eyes open with her hands, and said—

"Aaron—is that you—have we got much more to go. Ah!" she cried out suddenly. "What is it? Where am I?"

"Hush!" whispered Harold, sharply. "If he wakes suddenly, I won't answer for what may happen." And he rose, and closed the half-open door.

"Ah—you are the Doctor. Pray don't scold me. I was in a dream. I must have been sleeping—and yet—How is he?"

"He is not dead."

"Oh, sir—I have seen people stabbed before. I know they die sometimes. Can you cure him? Are you a wise man?"

"If you have seen people stabbed before, and have known people die of it, as you say, you most likely know that the chances of curing depend much more on the assassin than on the surgeon. Perhaps it may interest you to know that your friend's knife was very long, very sharp, and went very deep indeed, and that he knew where to strike nearly as well as I should myself. Lord Lisburn escaped immediate death by less than a quarter of an inch, and if I had not come in time, he would have been killed by the mere bleeding."

"Then it was you that saved him? He will not die?"

"I am not a prophet—I am only a surgeon. I have done what I can."

"Is it not written, then?"

"Written—what written? A prescription?"

"What—do not doctors read Bahi?"

"I don't understand you, mademoiselle?"

"How can you cure him without knowing if he will live? Let me see him. I can read."

"No; certainly not. You can do no good, and you might do a great deal of harm. And you must make up your mind to give up your rooms to Lord Lisburn."

She was honestly and eagerly anxious—that he could see; but he could neither understand what she was talking about, nor the look which she kept fixed upon his eyes the whole time. So keen was it that his own eyes, strong as they were, began to give way before hers, and it was not till he looked away that she relieved him by looking down. Then she said—

"Doctor, I am very unhappy."

"I suppose so."

"Why do you scold me?"

"I do not scold you."

"You might beat me if you please—I would not say a word. But when Aaron struck me, I felt myself turn all to fire. I think I should have killed him—I know I should have tried. Why do you scold me because he, I mean the young Ria, felt angry too? Are you angry with him?"

"With Lord Lisburn? No. How could he stand by and see any woman struck without giving back the blow? If it had only been——"

"In a better cause," he was going to add, but refrained: remembering,

perhaps, that his own misfortunes had mainly come from taking up the quarrel of a beggar-girl.

"Then why are you angry with me? Could I help being struck? Could I help his being brave? Did I put the knife into Aaron's hand? I would have been killed myself first. And you will not even let me go to see if he will live. You are bad and hard, and I thought you were good and kind. Never mind—I will go all the same."

He placed himself before the grotesque but piteous little figure, whose labyrinth of tumbled hair scarcely reached to his shoulder, and placed his hand on the handle of the folding door.

"No," he said, sharply; "I have told you you can only do harm. What is it you want to do? And I suppose that even you must know that Lord Lisburn's bedside is no place of yours, though he is so unlucky as to have turned you out of your room. If you wake him——"

"I shall not wake him. I shall make no more noise than a cloud," and she slipped off her shoes.

"But you might, and you shall not risk it. Tell me once more, what are you going to do?"

"I am going to read *Bahi*."

"What is that?"

"To know if he will live or die."

"What rubbish is all this? One would think you were talking witchcraft. Is it Polish—you are a Pole, are not you? Well, you cannot go in, that's all, nor will I leave the room till I am relieved. You have done mischief enough already without my giving you the chance of doing more. I wish to God there were no such things as women in the world."

To his sudden bewilderment, she dashed herself back again into the sofa and burst into a passion of tears.

"*Modevol!*" she cried out in a whispered scream, "I have the Evil Eye! The wise man says so—he knows it I have brought him bad luck, and if I look on him he will die."

Harold Vaughan let go the door and stood leaning over the fire-place. He had heard of the awful belief, as old as the world itself, that certain unhappy beings are cursed with an involuntary power of bringing a curse upon all they look upon, things and creatures, beasts and men, their nearest and dearest, their mothers, children, and wives. The Evil Eye is more terrible than the tooth of the vampyre, and may beam kindly from the face of the most loving-hearted of men. It may be of any hue, black, blue, or grey, it may be bright or dull, it may be stern or gay. It may meet ours in love or friendship, or light on us by chance in the street or railway-train: hate is not its essence nor good-will its antidote. Terrible is it to all who meet its power, but still more terrible is it to those from whom its influence falls. But, though the young doctor had heard and read of such things, he had never heard it spoken of, much less treated as an article of belief, till now.

"Nonsense," he said once more, "I don't mean any such rubbish. I don't want you to think me a wise man, and I'm sure I don't think you a wise woman. To show you what I think of your eyes, I give you leave to look at me as long as you please, without fear. I'm witch-proof—and if I were not, I should have no fear of you."

He spoke rudely enough, considering her sex and his own: but he had never practised compliments, not even to Claudia, and was certainly in no mood for them.

"Come," he said, "look at me this instant, or I shall be really angry. I don't say it's your fault, but any way enough trouble has come through you not to sit crying over old women's tales. Here," he said more kindly, remembering his calling though he had forgotten the courtesy which for the sake of one woman he had once been eager to show to all—"Here, drink this wine. I dare say you are nervous, and no wonder. I won't speak to you again, but you must not go into Lord Lisburn's room."

She took the wine and tasted it obediently, but never raised her eyes, nor even her face so much that they could be seen. He turned from her and sat down to his notes again.

After another ten minutes of silence,

"May I speak?" she asked miserably.

"Yes—if it is not about going into Lord Lisburn's room. What is it?"

"I want you to help me to remember. What will become of Aaron?"

"If Lord Lisburn dies—I should say he would be hanged. If Lord Lisburn does not die, I should say he ought to be hanged, and will be transported."

"Then I hope he will be hanged," she said, without reference to the preceding condition, and suddenly opening her large eyes as she spoke, but as suddenly closing them again. "But they must lag him first, and I don't think he'll leave *pateran*."

Vaughan looked at her sharply—not because a Polish singer talked in what was very like English slang: that might be a stage fashion—but because a note seemed to be struck in his memory.

"I wish, mademoiselle," he said, like a doctor asking to see a patient's tongue, "you would let me see your eyes."

"No," she answered resolutely, and turned herself wholly away.

"I know it is impossible, and yet I could almost swear I had met you before."

"Never."

"Have you been long in England? You speak English uncommonly well."

She made no answer.

"Surely you understand me? If I am curious, you must consider the strange way in which we are brought together. I don't want to pry into any mysteries. But you must remember that all this affair will have to be inquired into—and by rougher hands than mine are."

"Yes, I know—the policeman."

"And the judge and the jury. I shall have to be a witness, and so will you, as you would know very well if you knew anything of our English laws. I don't know much about criminal courts, but I suppose you will have to give your name."

"You know what that is—Mademoiselle Leczinska."

"But your Christian name?"

"Pauline," she answered readily.

"And—let me see—you might be asked where you come from—where you have been in England—if you have ever been at Manchester, for example, or Birmingham, or St. Bavons"—

"Never."

"Pray, may I ask—I know nothing of musical matters—where you have been singing till now?"

"Warsaw. It is all in the bills."

"And that song in the opera to-night?—but never mind: though it was very strange." Like the rest of the audience, he naturally assumed it to be Abner's—and what was more natural than that an opera-house tune should have found its way, like so many others, into a country inn? He knew nothing of the novelty of "Sylvia's Bracelet," and the reception of the song seemed to stamp it as some favourite and familiar *morceau*. And, though the identity of Pauline and Zelda may seem clear enough, a man, in practice, must be very daring to imagine for a moment the identity of a fashionable *prima donna* and a wandering beggar-girl. Sensible men never believe in coincidences; and such things, though they have been, are, and will be, belong to the region of romance, which is scorned by sensible men.

So Harold Vaughan was surprised for many moments, but bewildered for only one. It seemed to him very natural—as soon as he exercised the reason by which men are so often led astray—that one singing voice should resemble all singing voices as closely as a shellful of peas; that one strolling musician should be like another strolling musician; that a Pole, like a Russian, should be innately versed in all the dialects of Babel. It also seemed to him too improbable to be true, that the heroine of the Old Point Hotel should be the heroine of the Oberon; and that he, of all men, should stumble twice upon her, of all women. So he mentally accused himself of stupidity, and, like many another believer in the Probabilities, actually became what he accused himself of being. All riddles are very simple when they are explained; but plain facts are the greatest riddles of all.

Whether Mdle. Leczinska recognised Zelda's champion is another question. She was neither sensible, nor a man; and strange coincidences were of course the most natural things in the world to her. Besides, if a stray beggar-girl was a thing to be forgotten in a life that was self-absorbed, the first lips that had ever given her kind words were things to be remembered till Doom's day. But the Zelda whom Aaron, like Roman slave-masters,

had made a freedwoman by the sign of a blow, was certainly not one to renew, by confession, the character of the old self, which she had now trampled under foot and cast away. She had not been crowned with laurels only to appear in the guise of her bygone past before the only eyes from whom she cared to hide the degraded Zelda of old.

So, while he stood in thought, she sat crouched in timid shame, hiding carefully from him the baleful light of her evil eyes, that she might neither betray, nor be betrayed. And so they remained as far apart, as those who have once influenced one another's lives can ever be, until the house awoke, and the constable called to bring the important news that the lessee of the Oberon had not been found.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RIGHTS OF THE MATTER.

THE next day was a busy day for Harold Vaughan, who had for the present to assume the office of agent as well as physician to Lord Lisburn. The police disposed of, he sent for the most eminent surgeon of the day, who finally approved of all he had done. Then he went to the hotel where he had engaged to meet the Earl at breakfast, and saw the captain of the *Esmeralda*, who was cooling his heels hungrily in the coffee-room, and who was able to give him the name and address of Lord Lisburn's attorney, and of his banker, Sir William Penrose. If it had not been for the chance breakfast engagement, one of the richest noblemen in England would have suddenly disappeared from sight without being missed, and have been laid up in Golden Square lodgings, without money, or without friends, until he died or recovered sufficiently to make himself known; and even then he might have found it hard to prove that he was not either a lunatic or an impostor.

The attorney came, took the whole business into his own hands, looked at Lord Lisburn, who still lay unconscious in the singer's bedroom, had an interview with the great surgeon, and then drew up an authoritative account for the newspapers, so that his client's accident might wear the least disreputable air possible. He also offered his own house for a hospital as soon as the patient could be moved. He sent for a nurse, impressed the landlady with the rank and dignity of her new lodger—he knew of course that they would come out somehow—and made all arrangements with everybody. In short, he forgot nothing, with two trivial exceptions. One was, to think of the existence of Mdlle. Leczinska, except as a possible witness; the other, to repay Harold Vaughan his extravagance in cab-hire. But this was not mentioned; and he could not learn by the light of nature that Lord Lisburn's friend had spent his very last piece of gold.

The latter had not even a right to put up by his patron's bedside;

he was simply a chance medical man, who had been sent for on an emergency, and then, as a matter of course, had been turned out of the case by the patient's friends. Fortune had denied him even the refuge of the Arctic seas to escape from her persecutions. Of course, as soon as Lord Lisburn recovered, all would be well again; but how was he to eat or drink till then? He could not explain his case to the solicitor, for he could not run the risk of being sent about his business as a begging swindler, as a disreputable practitioner, who sought impudently to make a market out of troubled waters. No one knew of his relation to the Earl, and to sue *in formâ pauperis* would be only to court the answer, "If it is as you say, you must wait till my lord is able to attend to you. Of course I don't distrust you; but one must be careful in these days, and I must take care of my client's interests. Still, if you can produce any evidence of a claim to an advance of salary, I will see. But his lordship's physician to an Arctic expedition—forgive me if I say it sounds strange. Can you refer me to anybody—say, to his lordship's sailing-master, or any of his friends? No? That is unfortunate; for I am afraid I must wish you a very good morning. Business is business—of course you understand." This kind of speech, not even a workhouse training makes a man willing to risk with a good will. He had already discovered to what extent his well-worn clothes, combined with what had seemed an officious interference with Lord Lisburn's affairs, had made an impression on the attorney, even without his calling suspicious attention to them. As to Mademoiselle, the attorney probably thought, as a man of the world, of many choice attempts to account for everything, by squeezing the universe into a nutshell. "Grey heads won't grow on green shoulders," was of course the master-key he used to unlock this particular mystery, and, as a man of much experience and of the mental habit of jumping at conclusions to which much experience mostly leads, he did not care to examine whether the key turned. He had put in his pet proverb, and that was enough for him, as it is for all.

Women, however, are seldom saw-mongers. Not being good hands at generalising from experience, they require to get at the bottom of everything. Sir William Penrose was satisfied with the attorney's view of the matter, who quoted his proverb to the banker in strict confidence and with an air of shrewdness as though his quotation from the common stock of Procrustean philosophy had been an original discovery of a state secret. But Lady Penrose was not much inclined to hold that anything so universal and couched in such plain monosyllables could apply to an Earl. On other grounds, moreover, she was burning to hear all about everything, and Miss Perrot was the best informed person she knew. Once more, Miss Perrot was at home.

"I am so glad to find you," said the banker's wife, settling herself serenely. "I should have brought Laura, but she has a slight cold—nothing, I hope, but she must be careful. You are none the worse for the play, nor Miss—Miss—I mean your cousin?"

"Miss Brandt," answered Miss Perrot, laying an emphatic stress upon both syllables, "is very well. But that is a painful subject. Well, I did my duty—I could do no more."

"A painful subject? What is? Ah, yes, I did hear something—but then these things happen every day, Sir William says. I remember once a great friend of Sir William failing, but they said it was the best speculation he ever made. He had settlements and all sorts of things, and was let off paying all his debts, so it must be a good thing. I've often wondered why Sir William doesn't fail, only he always tells me he shall wait till worse times—not that the times could be much worse, and I'm sure it would be pleasant to get everything for nothing and pay no wages."

"Yes," Miss Perrot answered feelingly. "Very pleasant indeed. And very pleasant, very, to see one's own cousin's name in big letters all over the newspapers. It's all very well for you to speak up for strangers, but to be taken in by one's own flesh and blood, at least one's flesh and blood by marriage, is hard."

"Indeed—I didn't know that."

"No, nor anybody. I'm sure I shouldn't have believed it if I hadn't been expecting it all along. The number of times I've told Mr. Brandt, of course not in so many words, but as plainly that a blind mouse might read what would come of it all—you'd wonder that a man of business shouldn't believe me."

"Is it so very bad, then?"

"I don't like to speak harm of any girl, much less my own cousin—girls can't help their bringing up. But I must say when a girl is shut up like a sister of mercy all day long, with nothing to do but have all her whims and fancies, with carriages and horses, never having a chance of making a good match, painting till she breaks her legs, and then having to pay any money to get well again, and I don't know what besides, if anybody's surprised what comes of it all, it isn't I."

"Poor girl," said lady Penrose, rustling herself out with a sympathetic movement. "And you so fond of her—it must be very sad for you. But for my part, I never look for gratitude. One's always deceived."

"Always. And for my part I'll never mix myself up in people's business again. They must do without me and get on the best way they can."

"Are they likely to be much worse off, then?"

"It isn't that I think about so much as the folly. And it's not just to those they leave behind when people ruin themselves. It's selfish, that's the word. When people go into trade, those who are younger can't help having expectations: not but what I'm above thinking of dead men's shoes as they call them, but it's the principle. My own income's safe, thank God: lucky for me, it's in the funds."

"Lucky indeed."

"I declare when Claudis, Miss Brandt, opened that horrid letter, I

might have been knocked down with a feather. And would you believe it, she never even had the grace to go into hysterics? And what she'll do, I'm sure I don't know."

"But aren't there the settlements?"

"Not a penny."

"But there must be settlements. When I was married they talked more about the settlements than the trousseau. My poor father used to say I shouldn't marry till me and my girls were made as safe as the Bank of England."

"Your father was a sensible man. But Claudia's mother was as poor as a church mouse—I can't help saying it, though she was my own relation. Her father was in the herring fisheries, and married my aunt, and had twelve children, and glad he was to get one of them off his hands to anybody who'd give her bread and cheese."

"That makes a difference of course—I had some money of my own. Sir William himself can't touch it. But of course it is wrong to fail without settlements."

"It is downright wicked. I can't quite turn my back on them, of course, whatever the world may say of me. They're in the house now. But do anything I can't—and what's more, they know it. I can't give in to wicked selfishness by taking money out of the funds. It would be public robbery—making people live on the taxes who can't pay their own."

"Of course, that's plain—that's what Sir William calls political economy. So they're with you now? I hope I'm not in the way."

"Oh, pray don't go. I want to know the rights of that terrible business after the play—that young man——"

"Isn't it shocking? And he in my very own box only just before. You've seen it in the newspapers?"

"It made me shiver. When earls get murdered, what mayn't they do to you or I? It's enough to make one think of the other world—not but what I hope I'm as good a Christian as many that talk more."

"But the newspaper isn't half the story. Sir William had it all straight from head quarters, so I happen to know."

"Ah!"

"Of course I mustn't say a word."

"Of course not, dear Lady Penrose. But still, for the truth's sake—they do tell such lies——"

"But not the man who told Sir William. He is a lawyer—Lord Lisburn's own. He didn't tell everything, you know, of course, but Sir William can guess what people mean—he's in the House, you know, and I always know what Sir William means when he holds his tongue. So I think I may say that I really do know the story."

"Of course—lawyers and members get behind the scenes. It's a great thing to have a member for a husband, Lady Penrose!"

"You won't breathe a word?"

"Not to Adam."

"I know you won't—so I don't mind telling *you*. Leczinska, that's the way to pronounce it—well, of course you know what these people are. I am sure no such fuss was ever made over a new singer before. So it was plain enough there was something behind. We are an artistic family, you know, and understand those things."

"I see. Of course by something you mean somebody."

"That's just it. Sir William always used to wonder why poor Lord Lisburn, who is just the most charming young man I ever saw, and has played with Jane and Laura when they were all three babies, and not that high, never would take his seat, nor go into the Guards, nor keep his yacht quietly at Cowes like the rest of them, but must be going about just like a common sailor, and mixing himself up with all the people one meets abroad."

"With a wife in every port——"

"No; I don't mean that—I'm sure the young man has good principles; he wouldn't marry beneath him, or do anything really wrong. If I'd thought that, I'm too good a mother, I hope, to let him be seen speaking to one of my girls. But young men are so foolish, even the best of them: I'm sure I don't know what would become of me if I had a son. But I was always sure there was some beautiful creature at the bottom of all that yachting. It stands to reason."

"Then you think——?"

"I knew it; you see I used to feel quite like a mother to the poor young man. There ought to be a law to prevent such things, and as I often say to Sir William, if I were in the House I'd pass one. No doubt he made some voyages to Poland, and she picked him up there. What can a young man expect if he goes where all the people are Papists and refugees?"

"Then you don't think the young man is to blame? I'm glad of that—but, for my part, I couldn't think it. There's always something queer about people with names one can't spell. It's like having a board set up with Beware of Man-traps and Spring-guns."

"But then, you see young men won't beware. It's quite provoking how they take up with everything that's odd and queer, when there are hundreds of girls at home ready and waiting to be good English wives. So, of course, when this beautiful creature turns up here in town, up turns Lord Lisburn too. The moth and the candle—how true that is."

"True, indeed, Lady Penrose—and such a sad want of extinguishers!"

"I'd extinguish them. And don't tell me there was only chance in a young man keeping away for years, and going to a theatre before he'd seen even his oldest friends. I've heard say that he pays for the theatre, only, of course, not in his own name."

"What infatuation!"

"I'm sure my heart bleeds for him. Any way, I know he went

behind the scenes, and was actually at supper with her when this terrible business happened."

"And the other man?"

"Was some vile companion of the woman's—no doubt, one of her charming countrymen. There were others there, too. It was a regular den of thieves."

"Horrible—you don't say so?"

"You know what ways these people have of egging each other on. Of course Lord Lisburn couldn't put up tamely when it came to highway robbery. He defended himself bravely, I hear, while the girl stood by and looked on."

"Is it possible?"

"The struggle was terrible—it must have been. The poor dear Earl was fighting for his life."

"But did no one come?"

"Of course there was a disturbance, and the man Moses——"

"What—a Jew? What a gang!"

"I've no doubt: if I have any prejudice—and really I have as few as most people—it's against the Jews. Not but what there are some good—but then I don't call them real Jews. But where was I?"

"Moses——"

"Oh, yes—the man Moses ran up the chimney."

"And how did Lord Lisburn get away?"

"Poor young man, he's there now. It'll be a lesson to him all his days. The policeman found him positively weltering. Mr. King, the lawyer, saw him with his own eyes, and if he hadn't sent on the spot for Sir Godfrey Bowes to extract the knife on the spot, he'd have died the next minute. I must really have in Sir Godfrey to see Laura's cold. Of course I've offered my own house—that's the least I could do; its fearful to think of a real Earl lying ill in those horrible lodgings. But Sir Godfrey says it would be fatal to move him, so I've sent some calves'-foot jelly and beef-tea. Laura, poor girl, cried her eyes out; I really think it fretted her into her cold."

"I shouldn't wonder: there's a wonderful connection between body and mind."

"It's a shocking story; isn't it? Enough to make one hate one's own sex, I'm sure. There's one comfort, though—the poor young man's eyes must be opened now: it'll do him good to have him with us, to shew him a real English home."

"Yes—and who knows what may come of his knowing your dear girls, Lady Penrose?"

"I've never tried to force Jane's nor Laura's inclinations, and I never will, nor Sir William. But as a mother, I can't help my heart bleeding for the poor boy. I must do what I can to save him from bad hands. Perhaps now he will sell that horrid yacht, and settle down."

"And that creature, Leczinska," said Miss Perrot, meditatively. "I

wonder if she will sing again? I didn't half look at her on the stage—I'd give anything to have a good look at the wretched woman, just to see what there is about her."

"Don't speak of the wretch. I could see what she was as soon as she came out in that disgraceful dress, for which she ought to have been whipped. And then her voice—it was like a cat. I can tell you what was about her, that and nothing more."

"And what's that?"

"Impudence."

But Miss Perrot had no daughters in the market, and was unselfishly interested in the corners and cobwebs of this charitable world. The opera-singer who had brought a great English nobleman to the brink of the grave, had thus given a prestige to her startling *debut* that was more overwhelmingly attractive to her than all the puffs and posters of Aaron and Carol together. The new prima donna, whose sole thought for herself was to veil her evil eyes from doing further mischief, except to her blood-stained floor, had bounded into fame and drifted into infamy—which is more profitable still. Miss Perrot would rather have given her ears to stare at her than have closed her eyes to listen to a second Malibran. And, as Miss Perrot thought, so thought, or at least felt, ten thousand more.

CHAPTER XII.

WHERE THE CARCASE IS——

IN all the books of travels and travellers' tales—not excluding Lord Lisburn's *Sinbad*—which touch upon savages and savage people, it unfortunately happens that a Christian name and a regular civilized surname are given to the author upon his title-page. We have never as yet had *Messieurs et Mesdames les Cannibales peints par eux-mêmes*. We dwell upon their manners and customs—never remembering that theirs are not one whit more curious or more unnatural than our own. For my part, I have never been able to make out that to kill a man in battle for the purpose of eating him afterwards, is more unreasonable, or much more revolting, than to kill a few thousands in battle for more vague and shadowy purposes. War is no doubt a very admirable and useful institution, man's natural condition, his best incentive to the practice of honour, self-sacrifice, patience, energy, courage in defeat, generosity in triumph, and a thousand other fine qualities that tend to rust in piping times of peace, when the lion so far forgets the duties imposed upon him by his mane and jaws, as to lie down or frolic with the lamb. But why to kill and waste should be called glorious, while to kill and eat should make even torturers shudder, is hard to say. Hunger is surely quite as natural as a passion for glory; and a true cannibal, whom we call an inhuman beast, would probably call us inhuman fools.

This, I had better say at once—it is so easy to be misunderstood by wiser people than Miss Perrot or Lady Penrose—is not meant as an apology for the peculiar institutions of the Friendly Islanders, or the gastronomy of the South Seas. But it is as well to consider these occult matters sometimes, in order to realise how little we know about anybody whose misfortune it is to be born a savage, which is not necessarily to be a cannibal. By a savage I mean simply one who has read no poetry, no novels, no science, and no history; to whom life, his own life, stands out as an isolated fact, independent of the million traditions and conventionalities that we are pleased to call our lives, as if cogwheels of flesh could be said to live any more than cogwheels of iron: one who wonders at nothing, because he has no standard of probability drawn from the experiences of others; who has not even a bar-parlour for a university, or a solitary hut for a home: who has no associations, but only self-formed ideas. Such people are not very often cast up from the bottom of their sea upon the shoals of our own social shores, any more than one of us is often thrown upon a desert island. But when they are, as must happen sometimes, Alexander Selkirk on shore could not find himself more at sea.

Zelda, then, may be regarded as the central point in the universe, just as Eve must have felt in the very earliest days of Eden—without any thought of rights or duties, except the few simple ones that are comprehended in the idea of living. Not that her mind was a mere *tabula rasa*. She had been a minute Ulysses in her way, and had in her wanderings seen more animals, including men and women, not to speak of birds and squirrels, than often falls to the lot of an English-born girl. And her experience of the less innocent class of creatures had been such that it would be very hard indeed for the most practical man of business to cheat her or take her in. One does not pass one's early days for nothing among dupes and conjurors; and, like savages in general, she was quite wide awake where cowries were concerned. Then she had her memories. She could recall a great many sunrises and sunsets, feast-days and fast-days, sleepings and wakings, highways, byways, barns, taverns, and nameless towns. She had told truth in professing ignorance of St. Bavons, though she must have been in it or in its neighbourhood a dozen times. For science, she could bewilder a card-sharper with her talents in shuffling, cutting, and forcing; she knew all about the line of life and the mount of Venus; she could prophesy all future things from cinders and coffee-grounds; knew the titles of all the leading nobility of the lower regions, and could tell the stars by names not to be found in any astronomical catalogues. She could have taught both the Universities, and the Royal Society besides, words older than Homer, and cosmogonies more ancient than Hesiod. And yet she was only just beginning to learn that the police are not the ruling caste among mankind, and that the rest of the universe is not wholly divided between the fair-haired dupes who live in houses, and the brown people who give

them back scorn for scorn. Nor—though she could read stars, palms, cinders, cards, coffee-grounds, lips, voices, and eyes—could she read a single book-word. Her slave Lucas had been obliged to teach her the words of her part by rote, and the music by ear. Of fame she had no idea beyond that of transitory applause; of money, none beyond its being something to get anyhow, and then to throw away. Of right and wrong she knew just as much as most people—that is to say, she was as her education and associations had made her.

But, after all, a soul is a soul. The tree may be inclined by bending the twig; but no amount of bending will regulate its stature, its blossoms, or the fruit it bears. Her chance meeting with Harold Vaughan had done more to decide these things than her whole intercourse with Aaron. How and wherefore has been already told. This is no story of love at first sight, which is, for the most part, a fancy born of the desire to imitate the heroes and heroines of romances. The soil must be artificially prepared by sentimental agriculture for such fungus-like growths of poetical passion. "There are people who would never have been in love had they never heard talk of it," says a French maxim; and in the matter of love, as distinct from passion, at first sight, the maxim is true, not of some people, but of all.

When she saw this man for the second time, dropping once more like a god from the clouds to the aid of her and of all, and while he sat contemptuously rebuking her from the heights of a supreme superiority as though she were something utterly contemptible and vile, her whole soul blushed all over with the first shame she had ever known. She had spoken simple truth in giving him leave to beat her if he pleased. Every word he spoke stung her to the quick with a pain to which all the pain of all Aaron's blows had been absolutely nothing. He was cold, stern, cruel, he had come as the arbiter between life and death, nor had she ever seen this man who could not command his own fate, save as a master among men; he was the only human being she had ever seen whose actions could not be ascribed to impulse, or interest, or passion. All these attributes invested the young surgeon with a halo of mysterious glory in the eyes of this daughter of Eve, and turned every word of his into a rod wherewith to chastise her soul. She, whose loftiest specimens of the *genus homo* had been Goldricks, Abners, Carols and Lucases, tyrants, equals, and slaves, was simply overwhelmed by one who was to her the revelation and impersonation of justice that punishes, and of wisdom that saves. She knew nothing of his self-contempt, engendered by the eternal conflict of will and circumstance, nor could she have comprehended a syllable of his musings at the window, even if she had known of them. Infinitely little to himself, he was infinitely great to her; it was as if they were observing the same object through the opposite ends of a telescope. She felt, in short, as though she, after her wanderings, had suddenly arrived at the border of a great gulf, from which a new and wonderful country was plainly visible. She was the pilgrim, he the portal. But there was

no bridge to cross the gulf, and the keeper of the gate looked down upon her with scornful eyes, because she had no wings to fly upwards and over.

"Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest," was not in her unwritten book of psalms. She read it, "Oh, that I had the wings of an eagle, that I might spread them and soar to the sun." There is nothing so unutterably grotesque, if it is not unspeakably painful, as the desire of a strong soul to cage itself in the social bars, and to think that all outside itself is good, merely because it is all new and strange. But it is the way of women who believe in the strength of man. A man who receives the gift of a whole human soul ought to have the guilty conscience of one who has obtained valuable securities by false pretences. Perhaps that is the reason why the same Providence which gives the rhinoceros its toughness of hide, has given to men their shield of self-conceit. A modest man who suddenly found himself loved for his own sake, would hang himself for very shame to think that a fellow-creature had given him her all. Harold Vaughan is by no means the first man who has been robbed, crowned, and sceptred by a woman's hand in his own despite; and until it is proved that there are castes among souls, the soul of a savage must be held as valuable as that of a queen: the heart of a Zelda as weighty as that of a Claudia.

It was a strange life the poor girl led during the time that Lord Lisburn lay prostrate and unconscious in her room. Indeed she led not one, but three lives.

Her destiny did not compel her to figure as a witness in *Regina v. Aaron*, for the police, with all their proverbial intelligence and zeal, were unable to track the lessee of the Oberon beyond the window-sill. They were "on his traces," of course—but that meant whatever the readers of newspapers chose to believe. He was not going to leave "Pateran for a Chokengro," as he would have called leaving a trail for a constable, and England is as good a country for going under water to a man who knows how, as California. Lucas, for Zelda's sake, held his tongue, Carol held his for his own, and Zelda no more thought of describing her ex-tyrant by such peculiarities as his squint than she would have thought of saying that he had a nose. Both features were equally familiar, and therefore equally common-place, to her. So all the sea-ports were watched closely, and communication established with the authorities of foreign capitals, and all in vain. But though saved from having to appear publicly in a police-court, she was not to be allowed altogether to baulk public curiosity.

Meanwhile, the celebrated *Cantatrice*, Mdlle. Leczinska, who had sung before the world just once in her life, had the glory of having her name published almost every day. She did not know it, of course, but she was the most famous woman in all London for more than nine days.

As soon as she was left for the first time alone, she fairly opened her eyes. The sitting-room was no longer chaotic, for as soon as the landlady

learned her tenant's quality, she had set to work with brooms and dusters, making as much account of the *prima donna* as she would have made of a spider, or rather less, for she would have swept out the spider, while Mdle. Leczinska might stay or go—it was all one to her. The queen-regnant of gossip was of less account in her own rooms than the flies who intruded on the window-panes. That she was not served with warning to quit, is due to the existence of certain arrears of rent, and of other business relations between landlord and tenant which made it more desirable that the notice should come from her. Besides, the caprices of the Earl were necessarily respectable, or at least to be respected, and he might not be pleased when he recovered to find that the girl had been turned away. The presence of the hired nurse in the sick-room, acting under the great surgeon's strict orders, formed a sufficient guard for the folding-doors.

Having opened her eyes she went straight to the looking-glass, before which she raised herself on tip-toe. She was ready to break it to pieces for mortification at being shown so plainly in what a guise she had been seen by the only man for whose opinion she cared. But there was a consoling side to the unpleasant picture. "No," she thought, "I am safe: He could not know me. If I could only make myself look like a lady when he comes again!" So she rang the bell to obtain the means of making her toilette, asked for water and for her dresses to be brought from her room, and waited in vain patience to be attended to. She was used to hunger, but was at the same time in savage health, so she asked for food at the same time, also uselessly. At last, after a few quick turns up and down the room, she timidly tapped at the inner door and spoke to the nurse.

"I'm not a servant," said the latter, with virtuous scorn. "You had better ring the bell."

"I have," she said. "Perhaps they'll attend to you."

"Then if I was you I'd ring it again. I'm not to be troubled here by the likes of any one."

"But that's my own room, and all my things are there."

"That's it, is it?" asked the woman with a private nod of intelligence between herself and herself. "Ah, I thought the place didn't look like a young gentleman's. Well, it's nothing to me—I'm paid to watch and not to pry. But it's worth all my places to go against Sir Godfrey's orders, and you've no proper right, I suppose?"

Zelda stared. "I only want my own things. Mustn't I come in?"

"Not without Sir Godfrey's orders. And I'd have you know, ma'am, that I'm respectable."

"But only for a moment—I'll come in on tip-toe."

"It's not worth my while, ma'am. So if you've got nothing more to say—"

"Then if you'd only just throw everything out in a heap, and give me a basin of water——"

"That might do—but without orders, you see——"

Zelda took off one of her bracelets. "There," she said, "take that. And now throw me out my things."

The nurse stared in her turn, but she took the bracelet.

"Well," she said, without ceasing to stare, "I never thought much harm myself, whatever they might say. You see, ma'am, 'tisn't everybody understands how duty's duty, and how one has to keep to rules. But when a lady is a lady, that's another affair. There—there's your things off the floor, and there's the water."

"And do you think you could get me a piece of bread?"

"Well, ma'am—I'm not a servant: my place is my place."

"But I am starved."

"But then you see, ma'am, that's another going against orders."

Zelda took off another bracelet. "There," she said, "that's for a crust, or anything."

"And your ladyship won't forget that it's against rules? Not but what it's right to oblige a real lady. Here's my own tray—it isn't quite cold."

"Thank you—that's all I want now. And when will he be back?"

"Sir Godfrey? I'd tell your ladyship, I'm sure: only I was to say nothing about nothing to nobody—leastways for nothing. But your ladyship understands that, I'm sure."

"Sir Godfrey—but I mean the other gentleman—what is he called?"

"Dr. Vaughan. I remember him at Guy's."

"And what's Guy's?"

"Fancy not knowing what's Guy's! Why, one of the hospitals."

"And what's that?"

"You don't know what's a hospital? Why, wherever were you born? It's a big place where they cure people for nothing."

"Then Dr. Vaughan cures people for nothing?"

"Those that can't pay."

"Is he very wise?"

"Wise? If you mean clever, so they used to say."

"And does he always cure everybody?"

"Well, everybody that doesn't die."

"And always for nothing?"

"Well, ma'am, between you and I, I never heard of Dr. Vaughan turning a penny: I expect he's one of your too clever ones—there's many such I've known. That's a queer one," thought the nurse to herself as Zelda carried off her breakfast-tray.

"Vaughan," thought Zelda, impressing the name on her mind. "He cures people for nothing," she mentally repeated, as she washed the remains of paint from her skin and combed out her hair. "And Aaron used to ask half-a-crown for his pills. How rich and good he must be. I wonder, shall I see him again? No, never!" she exclaimed almost aloud as the mirror caught the reflection of her eyes, with all their fatal

brilliancy. "He shall not look three times on these hateful eyes." Her toilette was now finished, and in spite of all her troubles she devoured the remnants of the nurse's breakfast eagerly, and without leaving a crumb. Then, with a deep sigh, she took out a pack of cards from a table drawer, sat down, and dealt them out face upward. "I ought to have seen his hand—and I must somehow." But she was not clear in her own mind whether by "Him" she meant Lord Lisburn or Harold Vaughan.

She was thus absorbed in the study of her Sibylline leaves—for the task was guided by strict and by no means easy principles—when she heard a voice just behind her shoulder exclaim,

"The two on the ace, please! You'll never make it come that way!"

She looked round with a start, and saw Carol. She had no objection to let her eyes fall as straight as they pleased on him.

"Are you fond of Patience, mademoiselle? I don't much care about it myself. But go on with your game, never mind me. I've just been through the next room, to see Lord Lisburn. The poor fellow didn't even recognise me. But I came to see you too. I have been sitting up all night with an idea, and settled it this morning. The Oberon's all up, of course: nobody can see their way to getting any pay. But look here," he went on, pointing to a paragraph in a newspaper. "I put it in this morning. Oh, you can't read English? True. Listen then. 'Mlle. Leczinska, the new *prima donna* at the Oberon, closed for the present till further notice, has accepted an engagement for a series of concerts, of which the particulars will be duly announced.' That'll fetch them, if I know anything about such things. Strike while the iron's hot—that's Energy. Abner—I put him up to it—is going to take the Oberon himself, and I'm going to find him backers, and then we'll have the Bracelet out again. We must keep the ball rolling, and I mean you to be top-sawyer of them all. Name your own terms—you'll get them. Say seventy a week and a brougham—I'm your agent you know, and you can give me ten."

"What—they want me to sing again?"

"Of course they do. Abner's got over his temper, and sees things like me. By Jove, it's worth a thousand pounds to have a peer of the realm stabbed in one's rooms. Lucas jumped at it. He's an ass, but he knows a thing or two—he'll cram you up, and I'll cram you down. What do you think—seventy a week and a brougham, with only ten off for me? Better than Aaron, eh? I don't think you saw the colour of much of his money. By Jove, the Jews are done, though!"

"I am to have seventy pounds—for singing a song?"

"That's the tune. Seventy pounds every week—ten pounds a day. That's three thousand six hundred and fifty pounds a year. Add on all the presents you'll get—say three thousand more. Gloves and bouquets—you certainly won't cost the public less than five hundred. And the brougham. Of course you'll have to find your own clothes and your own

iving; but I've reckoned you ought to put yourself down at eight thousand. As to my ten pounds a week, that's nothing."

This began to touch the second of her lives. She had already swallowed her first mouthful of glory in that never-to-be-forgotten moment when she, who trembled before one solitary fellow-creature, had wrested triumph from hundreds. The aroma of that triumph still hung about her, and made her long to drown herself in it once more. Next best to being great in the eyes of one, is to be great in those of all: if Zelda was doomed to carry with her the curse of the evil eye, and to be shamed and shunned, Sylvia at least could take her revenge. Nor did the feast of glory thus spread out before her tempt her new-born appetite for it the less because it was served up in dishes and covers of gold. This is not the temper of Genius, perhaps, but is certainly the temper from which Genius has often sprung.

While Carol was yet speaking, her eyes sought the window through which Aaron had escaped; but they did not follow him. They were looking out into the universe which was gradually beginning to shape itself out of chaos. But her fancies soon fell back again.

"But my pocket!" she exclaimed.

"Your pocket?"

"Yes—how in the world shall I be able to get it all in?"

"Get what in?"

"All that money!"

"Capital! Oh, I'll soon find a dress-maker for that—or a tailor," he added. "You only get the money: I know how to keep it. So you'll consent to change your notes for gold? You'll be a millionairess in less than no time, by Jove!"

"I shall be a *Rani*," she said, answering her own thoughts.

"You'll be a Countess," he said, thinking backwards through the folding doors.

"I shall be a Lady," she half-whispered, thinking upwards to Harold Vaughan.

In Friendship.

Il faut dans ce bas monde aimer beaucoup de choses,
 Pour savoir après tout ce qu'on aime le mieux. . . .
 Il faut fouler au pieds des fleurs à peine écloses ;
 Il faut beaucoup pleurer, dire beaucoup d'adieux
 De ces biens passagers que l'on goûte à demi
 Le meilleur qui nous reste est un ancien ami,—

ALFRED de Musset says, in his sonnet to Victor Hugo : and as we live on we find out who are in truth the people that we have really loved, which of our companions belongs to us, linked in friendship as well as by the chances of life or relationship.

Sometimes it is not until they are gone that we discover who and what they were to us—those “good friends and true” with whom we were at ease, tranquil in the security of their kind presence. Some of us, the longer we live, only feel more and more that it is not in utter loneliness that the greatest peace is to be found. A little child starts up in the dark, and finding itself alone, begins to cry and toss in its bed, as it holds out its arms in search of a protecting hand ; and men and women seem for the most part true to this first childish instinct as they awaken suddenly : (how strange these awakenings are, in what incongruous places and seasons do they come to us !) People turn helplessly, looking here and there for protection, for sympathy, for affection, for charity of human fellowship ; give it what name you like, it is the same cry for companionship, and terror of the death of silence and absence. Human Sympathy, represented by inadequate words or by clumsy exaggeration, by feeble signs or pangs innumerable, by sudden glories and unreasonable ecstasies, is, when we come to think of it, among the most reasonable of emotions. It is life indeed ; it binds us to the spirit of our race as our senses bind us to the material world, and makes us feel at times as if we were indeed a part of nature herself, and chords responding to her touch.

People say that as a rule men are truer friends than women—more capable of friendship. Is this the result of a classical education ? Do the foot-notes in which celebrated friendships are mentioned in brackets, stimulate our youth to imitate those stately togas, whose names and discourses come travelling down to us through two thousand years, from one country to another, from one generation to another, from one language to another, until they flash perhaps into the pages of Bohn's Classical Library, of which a volume has been lent to me from the study-table on the hill ? It is lying open at the chapter on friendship. “To me indeed, though he was snatched away, Scipio still lives, and will always live ; for I love the virtue of a man, and assuredly of all things that either fortune or nature has bestowed upon me, I have none which I can compare with the friendship of Scipio.” So says Cicero, speaking by the mouth of Lælius and of Bohn, and the generous thought still lives after

many a transmigration, though it exists now in a world where perhaps friendship is less thought of than in the days when Scipio was mourned. Some people have a special gift of their own for friendship; they transform a vague and abstract feeling for us into an actual voice and touch and response. As our life flows on—"a torrent of impressions and emotions bounded in by custom," a writer calls it whose own deep torrent has long since overflowed any narrow confining boundaries—the mere names of our friends might for many of us almost tell the history of our own lives. As one thinks over the roll, each name seems a fresh sense and explanation to the past. Some, which seem to have outwardly but little influence on our fate, tell for us the whole hidden story of long years. One means perhaps passionate emotion, unreasonable reproach, tender reconciliation; another may mean injustice, forgiveness, remorse; while another speaks to us of all that we have ever suffered, all that we hold most sacred in life, and gratitude and trust unailing. There is one name that seems to me like the music of Bach as I think of it, and another that seems to open at the Gospel of St. Matthew. "My dearest friend," a young man wrote to his mother only yesterday, and the simple words seemed to me to tell the whole history of their lives.

"After these two noble fruits of friendship, peace in the affections, and support of the judgment, followeth the last fruit, which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels. I mean aid and bearing a part in all actions and occasions," says Lord Bacon, writing in the spirit of Cicero three hundred years ago.

To be in love is a recognised state; relationship without friendship is perhaps too much recognised in civilised communities; but friendship, that best blessing of life, seems to have less place in its scheme than almost any other feeling of equal importance. Of course it has its own influence; but the outward life appears, on the whole, more given to business, to acquaintance, to ambition, to eating and drinking, than to the friends we really love: and time passes, and convenience takes us here and there, and work and worry (that we might have shared) absorb us, and one day time is no more for our friendship.

One or two of my readers will understand why it is that I have been thinking of friendship of late, and have chosen this theme for my little essay, thinking that not the least lesson in life is surely that of human sympathy, and that to be a good friend is one of the secrets that comprise most others. And yet the sacrifices that we usually make for a friend's comfort or assistance are ludicrous when one comes to think of them. "One mina, two minæ; are there settled values for friends, Antisthenes, as there are for slaves? For of slaves, one is perhaps worth two minæ, another not even half a mina, another five minæ, another ten." Antisthenes agrees, and says that some friends are not even worth half a mina; "and another," he says, "I would buy for my friend at the sacrifice of all the money and revenues in the world."

I am afraid that we modern Antisthenes would think a month's income a serious sacrifice. If a friend is in trouble, we leave a card at

his door, or go the length of a note, perhaps. We absent ourselves for months at a time without a reason, and yet all of this is more want of habit than of feeling; for, notwithstanding all that is said of the world and its pompous vanities, there are still human beings among us, and, even after two thousand years, true things seem to come to life again and again for each one of us, in this sorrow and that happiness, in one sympathy and another; and one day a vague essay upon friendship becomes the true story of a friend.

In this peaceful island from whence I write we hear Cicero's voice, or listen to *In Memoriam*, as the Friend sings to us of friendship to the tune of the lark's shrill voice, or of the wave that beats away our holiday and dashes itself upon the rocks in the little bay. The sweet scents and dazzles of sunshine seem to harmonise with emotions that are wise and natural, and it is not until we go back to our common life that we realise the difference between the teaching of noble souls and the noisy bewildered translation into life, of that solemn printed silence.

Is it, then, regret for buried time,
That keener in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colours of the crescent prime.

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the scene to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Here, then, and at peace, and out of doors in the spring-time, we have leisure to ask ourselves whether there is indeed some failure in the scheme of friendship and in the plan of that busy to-day in which our lives are passed; over-crowded with people, with repetition, with passing care and worry, and unsorted material. It is perhaps possible that by feeling, and feeling alone, some check may be given to the trivial rush of meaningless repetition by which our time is frittered away, our precious power of love and passionate affection given to the winds.

Sometimes we suddenly realise for the first time the sense of kindness, the treasure of faithful protection, that we have unconsciously owed for years, for our creditor has never claimed payment or reward, and we remember with natural emotion and gratitude that the time for payment is past; we shall be debtors all our lives long—debtors made richer by one man's generosity and liberal friendship, as we may be any day made poorer in heart by unkindness or want of truth.

Only a few weeks ago a friend passed from among us whose name for many, for the writer among the rest, spoke of a whole chapter in life, one of those good chapters to which we go back again and again. This friend was one of those who make a home of life for others, a home to which we all felt that we might come sure of a wise and unfailing sympathy. The door opens, the friend comes in slowly with a welcoming smile on his pale and noble face. Where find more delightful companionship than his? We all know the grace of that charming improvised gift by which he seemed able to combine disjointed hints and shades into a whole, to weave our crude talk and ragged suggestions into a complete scheme

of humorous or more serious philosophy. In some papers published a few years ago in the *Cornhill Magazine*, called "Chapters on Talk," a great deal of his delightful and pleasant humour appears.

Occupying a foremost position among these, I find a small, but for its size exceedingly vigorous and active member of the garrulous species, to which the name "Perpetual-drop Talker" may perhaps be given with some degree of propriety. In dealing with a new branch of science, as I am now doing, the use of new terms is inevitable, and it is hoped that this one, and such other technical expressions as have been introduced in the course of these chapters, will be favourably received by talk-students generally. The Perpetual-drop Talker then—I will venture to consider the term as accepted—is a conversationalist of a species easily recognisable by all persons possessed of even moderate acuteness of perception. The chief and most remarkable characteristic of him is that his chatter is incessant, and that there issues from his mouth a perpetual dribble of words, which convey to the ears of those who hear them no sort of information worth having, no new thing worth knowing, no idea worth listening to. These talkers are found in the British Isles in great numbers. There is no difficulty in meeting with specimens. If you live in a street, and will only sit at your window for a sufficient length of time, one of them is sure to pass. He has a companion with him, the recipient of that small dropping talk. Perpetual Drop points with his stick, calling his friend's attention to a baker's shop—what is he saying? He is saying, "Ah, German, you see: Frantzmänn, German name. Great many German bakers in London: Germans and Scotch: nearly all bakers are either one or the other." You continue to watch, and you observe that this loquacious gentleman is again pointing.

"Where you see those houses," he is saying now, "there were nothing but green fields when I was a boy. Not a brick to be seen anywhere." And so he goes on commenting on everything. Whatever his senses inform him of, he seems obliged to put on record. "Piebald horse," he says, as one goes by him in an omnibus; or, "Curious smell," as he passes the fried-fish stall. This is the man with whom we have all travelled in railway-trains. He proclaims to his companion—a person much to be pitied—the names of the stations as the train arrives at each—"Ah, Croydon," he says; or, "Ah, Redhill,—going to stop, I see." He makes his comments when they do stop. "Little girl with fruit," he says; or, "Boy with papers." Very likely he will imitate the peculiar cry of this last—"Mornin' papaw," for his friend's benefit. This kind of talker may be studied very advantageously in railway-trains. He is familiar with technical terms. He remarks, when there is a stoppage, that we are "being shunted on to the up-line till the express goes by." Presently there is a shriek, and a shake, and a whirl, and then our friend looks round with triumph. "That was it," he says; "Dover express, down-line." This is a very wearying personage. He cannot be quiet. If he is positively run out and without a remark to make, he will ask a question. Instead of telling you what the station is, he will in this case ask you to tell him. "What station is this?" is a favourite inquiry with him. He doesn't want to know: he is not going to stop at it: he merely asks because his mouth is full of words, and they must needs dribble out in some form or other. In this case it takes an interrogative form. A tiresome individual this: one cannot help speculating how many times in the course of his life he has thought it necessary to inform his fellow-creatures that the morning has been fine or cold, as the case might be, and the weather generally seasonable, or the reverse.

I have not said much all this time about good listeners. They are scarce, almost as scarce as good talkers. A good listener is no egotist, has but a moderate opinion of himself, is possessed of a great desire of information on all kinds of subjects, and of a hundred other fine qualities. It is too much the general impression that listening is a merely negative proceeding, but such is very far from being really the case. A perfectly inert person is not a good listener, any more than a bolster is. You require the recipient of your talk to manifest intelligence, to show interest, and, what is more, to feel it. The fact is, that to listen well—as to do anything else well—is not easy. It is not easy even to seem to listen well, as we observe notably in the conduct of bad actors and stage amateurs, who break down in this particular, perhaps more often and more frequently than in any other.

But it was even more in his society than in his writing that our friend showed himself as he was. His talking was unlike that of anybody else; it sometimes put me in mind of another voice out of the past. There was an earnest wit, a gentle audacity and simplicity of expression that made it come

home to us all. Of late, E. R. was saying he spoke with a quiet and impressive authority that we all unconsciously acknowledged. The end of pain was near. Of his long sufferings he never complained. But if he spoke of himself, it was with some kind little joke or humourous conceit and allusion to the philosophy of endurance, nor was it until after his death that we knew what his martyrdom had been, nor with what courage he had borne it.

He thought of serious things very constantly, although not in the conventional manner. One of the last times that we met he said to me, "I feel more and more convinced that the love of the Father is not unlike that of an earthly father, and that as an earthly father, so He rejoices in the prosperity and material well-doing of his children." Another time, quoting from the *Roundabout Papers*, he said suddenly, "'Be good, my dear.' Depend upon it, that is the whole philosophy of life; it is very simple."

Speaking of a friend, he said with some emotion, "I think I love M. as well as if he were dead."

He had a fancy, that we all used to laugh over with him, of a great central building, something like the Albert Hall, for friends to live in together, with galleries for the sleepless to walk in at night.

Perhaps some people may think that allusions so personal as these are scarcely fitted for the pages of a Magazine, but what is there in truth more unpersonal than the thought of a wise and gentle spirit, of a generous and truthful life? Here is a life that belongs to us all; we have all been the better for the existence of the one man. He could not be good without doing good in his generation, nor speak the truth as he did without adding to the sum of true things. And the lesson that he taught us was—"Let us be true to ourselves; do not let us be afraid to be ourselves, to love each other and to speak and to trust in each other."

Last night the moon rose very pale at first, then blushing flame-like through the drifting vapours as they rose far beyond the downs; a great black-bird sat watching the shifting shadowy worlds from the bare branch of a tree, and the colts in the field set off scampering. Later, about eleven o'clock, the mists had dissolved into a silent silver and nightingale-broken dream—in which were vaporous downs, moonlight, sweet sudden stars, and clouds drifting, like some slow flight of silver birds. L—— took us to a little terrace at the end of his father's garden. All the kingdoms of the night lay spread before us, bounded by dreams. For a minute we stood listening to the sound of the monotonous wave that beats away our time in this pleasant place, and then it ceased—and in the utter silence a cuckoo called, and then the nightingale began, and then the wave answered once more. It will all be a dream to-morrow, as we stumble into the noise, and light, and work of life again. Monday comes commonplace, garish, and one can scarce believe in the mystical Sunday night. And yet this tranquil Sunday night is more true than the flashiest gas-lamp in Piccadilly. Natural things seem inspired at times, and beyond themselves, and to carry us upwards and beyond our gas-lamps; so do people seem revealed to us at times in the night, when all is peace.

Our Civilisation.

ENGLAND to an Englishman, and its hearths and homes the perfect realisation of domestic happiness and virtue; to a Frenchman, *la belle France* and Paris the queen of the world; his Vaterland to a German, unapproachable in political solidity, intellectual acumen, and moral purity; twenty points given all round and the United States beating the universe hollow, to an American; to the citizens of all but perhaps some of the very smallest states, their own country in the van of civilisation, and every other nation in the rear in exact ratio to the amount of difference between them. There is no question but that this is the truth broadly stated, and that we are all satisfied of our own absolute superiority in the art and science of life—all sure that we are the most civilised of existing peoples. Also, the majority everywhere take things as they are to be pretty nearly as good as they can be, save in a few unimportant matters which might be the better for a little timely tinkering, and hold that the folks who make a fuss about reform and reconstruction are, for the most part, meddling busybodies who are more likely to mar than to mend whatever they undertake.

There is a good side to this national self-complacency. If its excess makes men obstinate, contracted, intolerant, the want of it leaves them without patriotism because without pride in the national ideal. Modesty has a tendency to degenerate into self-abasement; facility to learn into inability to retain; and for every gain got by plasticity there is a corresponding loss in firmness of grip. But for all that, it may be as well every now and then to confess that we are only half educated, and to put ourselves to school again for another turn at the grammar of progress. If too much leaning to new ways prevents our standing upright in any, not to stir is never to advance, and without circulation and influx we should soon become fossilised. What, then, is this boasted civilisation of ours? this English Hearth and Home of which we are so proud?—the life of this Land of Liberty—this Britannia which rules the waves, and which has such a generous contempt for every other land, bound or free, merely because it is not British? How real is it? How deep does it go? And is it civilisation at all in any of the essentials of that condition?

At the very threshold we are met by material anomalies which perplex and humiliate us. Take an ordinary middle-class dwelling house, with its bad drainage and unscientific ventilation; its clumsy contrivances of all kinds; its underground caves, where the servants stifle through the day

deprived of direct light and air, supplemented by the windy perches under the roof assigned them for the night ; its cruel stairs, the weariness of which could be so easily obviated by a simple mechanical arrangement ; its bells which only summon and do not explain why ; its wasteful grates where the wealth and well-being of the world at large is dissipated to fry a slice of ham ; its partial water-supply and insufficient method of both heating and lighting ; its want of protection against fire, and its absence of a sure way of escape should it break out : take the pipes which are always bursting, and cannot be got at without pulling the walls and floors to pieces ; the cisterns into which the sewage gas escapes by means of the waste-pipe that leads direct into the drains ; those drains themselves, of which no one knows the direction or extent, which are always " going wrong," and which often end in a cesspool right under the house : take the wallpapers lined with putrid paste ; the heavy woollen hangings, which hold dirt and dust, and the germs of scarlet fever for months after cure, like eggs hidden carefully in a nest : take the insane, or rather criminal, ignoring on the part of the architect of all the laws of health as influenced by domestic conditions : take our houses as the shell in which we express and enclose our civilisation, and we are forced to confess that we have not yet mastered the initial figure.

And, if this is true of well-found houses, what shall we say of the poorer sort ?—those disgraceful hovels where the bone and sinew of our country herd like beasts and die like vermin ? The very cattle on a gentleman's estate are better lodged than the men and women of his own race, and the horse he keeps for show and personal pleasure claims a regard and consideration not accorded to the peasant by whom he gains his wealth. All sorts of strange diseases break out in these impure dwellings, and idiotcy and scrofula are nature's comments on man's sloth. Dirt, overcrowding, the conditions of a savage's wigwam, a life in which modesty and decency are words without meaning and virtue is rendered impossible, a life which kills both body and soul, which engenders vice and necessitates disease—all this lies at the very doors of our grand palaces and first-class mansions—those whited sepulchres of luxurious death ; and then we say that we are civilised. We hire the best architects of the day to design the façade and devise the graceful ornamentation of our palaces—but down there in the basement, up in the cisterns fouling the water we drink, stealing through pipe and drain poisoning the air we breathe, typhus and diphtheria hold their own unchecked ; and when we have done our best, we have only built a more pleasant-looking trap than usual—and the thing we have got inside is death. And while we build these whited sepulchres with so much care at least for decency and beauty, the peasants on our estates—the workmen in our towns and villages—the men and women by whom we live, whose labour makes our leisure possible, and whose poverty gives us wealth—die, or do worse than die, for want of the first requisites of wholesome human living. This condition of things may be necessary from the point of view of bricks and mortar, their cost

and the percentage to be had out of house property; but it is not civilisation.

Are we more civilised in our dress than in our dwellings? Not a whit. Our guide and ruler here is that irresponsible tyrant we call fashion, and neither comfort nor beauty has a word to say. To be sure men have discarded many absurdities, though they have retained more. They hold to their stiff shirt-collars which rasp their necks, their wide expanse of linen front; which the very act of fastening rumples, their meaningless swallow-tails, their hideous hats, their tight-fitting military uniform, and all the mysteries of seam and gusset and band, which are mere symbols of the art of cutting out and not necessary to the comfort of shape. But even with the follies they retain they can move about with ease and unhampered. Women, on the contrary, torture themselves in the name of fashion with touching fidelity. They would as soon forego their nationality as their stays; and the Thirty-nine Articles are less sacred to them than their multiplicity of garments all hanging from the waist. It is to keep these up, and lessen their heavy weight, that they put themselves into steel cages which destroy all grace of line and all comfort of movement, save in walking. The beauty of simplicity is a thing dead and done with in their code. Heads are loaded with false hair stuck about with lace, feathers, flowers, and coloured glass; ears are pierced that bits of crystallized earth, or imitations thereof, may be hung into the holes; health is destroyed, and the tender vital organs which nature has so sedulously protected by the outer casing of ribs are compressed and crushed that the waistband may be reduced to seventeen inches; and the highest efforts of millinery genius are directed to the most elaborate method of sewing one bit of stuff on to another bit of stuff, to the confusion of anything like a leading line or an intelligible idea. We laugh at the Chinese "golden water-lilies," the Papuan head-dress, the Hindû nose-ring, the African lip-distender; we laugh while we look in the glass and complacently brush out our frills, and congratulate ourselves on looking "stylish" and "well got up." But our highest efforts culminate in partial nakedness in the middle of winter if we are women, in black broad-cloth in the dog-days if we are men—in absurd lengths of silk trailing after us as we walk in the one case, in a ridiculous pennon meandering at our backs in the other; they culminate in fashion, not in use or beauty or simplicity; but while we do thus dress without personal convenience or artistic meaning, we have no true civilisation in the matter of our clothes. Modern millinery is neither art nor nature. It is our translation of the primitive man's delight in rags and gaudy colours; and there is no essential difference between the two. What difference there is consists simply in conventional acceptance; but the æsthetic base of each is the same.

We are supposed to have civilised the forms and perfected the art of society. We look back on the rude feasts of our forefathers with disdain and wonder at their gross gluttony and coarse lavishness. But, at least, they fed the poor in those days of ruder living; and a feast, if wanting in

gastronomic art, was bountiful in hospitality. As it is, hospitality is a name; no more. There is none of it in the sense of sharing your goods with others, in our modern entertainments. A dinner or a soiree is a social obligation discharged perforce; or an occasion for display; or both combined. To prefer those who need is as far removed from the calculations of the host as the "fire party" imagined by Punch. No one who gives a party, as it is called, thinks of the real pleasure or good which it will be to the guests: only whether it is "well done" according to the conventional standard—that is, reflecting honour on the giver. The arrangements of society are in themselves utterly barbarous, while affecting to be specially civilised. One could imagine a simple, generous, and most delightful banquet, with music and flowers, and plenty of space and freedom of action—a banquet that did not include three long hours of cramp and surfeit with an indigestion to follow, or a crowded crush in a stifling room where conversation is impossible, and the music not worth listening to. One could imagine arrangements more artistically lovely than now, yet not more costly; a welcome more hearty, and with less parade. But our civilisation dooms us to a table where one side freezes and the other burns; where draughts chill the naked shoulders at one end, and the heated air, loaded with unwholesome vapours, threatens apoplexy at the other; to rooms wherein delicate women turn sick and faint for want of oxygen in a fetid atmosphere used up by two or three hundred pair of lungs; it dooms us to accept invitations given by people we dislike and to eat things that will disagree with us, just as it dooms us to an artificial manner, an insincere smile, a false speech; it dooms us to open our own house to hundreds of our fellow-creatures, not half-a-dozen of whom we care ever to see again, just as it dooms us to the suppression of all emotion, of all earnest thought, of all honest words; and when we have made ourselves the most like animated dolls in manner, and put ourselves to most inconvenience for things we detest and people we despise in fact, then we are considered of the best breeding and the most perfected civilisation. Half the entertainments too, given by the middle classes, are only possible through screwing and pinching in things more essential to the true dignity of life than the giving of a dinner badly cooked and worse arranged, which no one who eats really enjoys. Yet, if the food is questionable, kid gloves are *de rigueur*; and you cut your stale fish with electroplated knives and forks of the covenanted pattern. Honour to those who dare to offer simple pleasures within their means of money and service, and who invite to their house those whom it will both delight and benefit, not only those whom they say they "must" by the queer law of social reciprocity in boredom and pretence!

If we were really civilised we should have fewer servants than we have now, and give them less unpleasant work to do. Machinery can be made to do much of the roughest labour to which we now dedicate living hands; and co-operation would help us to keep each other more sacredly than now. Are "housemaids' knees" the product of civilisa-

tion?—yet we do little to stamp out this disease by better methods. We hold convulsively by those which were in use when human labour ranked pretty nearly as low as brute labour of the present day, and was more prodigally employed in times when the dignity of humanity, as applied to the workers of the world, was a creed as foreign as the rights of slaves. The consequence is that many things are ill done because the labour needed to keep them in conventional perfection is distasteful, and the result inadequate to the pains bestowed. With more scientific simplicity we should have better service and more contented servants. But when we shall have come to scientific simplicity on the one hand, and loving human care for those we employ on the other, we shall have come to true civilisation—a state of things which grants the power of beauty, refinement, intellectual development, and social because human dignity all round. This is not a very frightful prospect; yet it must not be forgotten that we have to be educated up even to the general wish for such development.

Funeral pomp and bridal finery are things again which hold on to the very soul of society. The duty imposed on us to impoverish the living that the dead may be put into the ground with a certain *étalage* of nodding plumes, sleek Flemish horses, and strange men draped in floating black, seems to some of us inalienable to the decency of civilisation; to others remnants of the barbaric emphasis with which savage chiefs and braves conclude their lives. If we held the theory that the ghosts of the dead were soothed by our display, we should then have some kind of reason why, more or less sound. But we have not even this to impel us; only the tyranny of custom. So we go on putting the poor pale dead into coffins of oak bossed with silver and lined with satin, dissipating the bread of the widow and children because we are civilised, and show is a greater thing than substance. In our marriages too, we beat our tom-toms, and summon a crowd to see a girl dressed in white, with orange blossoms made of kid and cambric in her hair, assigned to the keeping of a man whom perhaps she does not love, and who, on his part, may have repented of his contract before the honeymoon is over. Marriage being at the best but a lottery with more blanks than prizes, it seems a little unnecessary to call the world to take note how the drawing is begun. Our bridal finery of dress and feast too often proves to be no better than the Hindû widow's "bravery" when she comes to perform suttee; and say what we will there is a certain sacrificial look about it, a decking and tressing as of a victim, which is one of the sharpest satires against the institution we profess to honour. If we consider, too, the character of many of our marriages, we do not find anything in them so admirable that we need ask heaven and earth to witness their fulfilment. Women sold for a settlement, and men selling themselves for a fortune; the scrofulous mated with the insane, and neither the mental nor the moral development of the family taken into account as a basis of calculation for the future; disease and miserable skulls perpetuated for private gain, as if the nobler

peopling of the world was nobody's care, and its ignoble nobody's sin : frankly, is this civilisation ? We hang a man who has killed another, but we suffer men and women to murder the future of society at their pleasure. We object to the reckless dissemination of small-pox say, by selfishness and want of consideration for others, but when it comes to the perpetuation of hereditary disease by marriage, then we are powerless, and have not even a public opinion as a restraining agent.

Turn to the base of the pyramid, the root of the flower, the class on which the whole social fabric rests, and what is our civilisation there ? Adulterated food, short weights, filched pay, high charges, and the general oppression of the weaker—the war of work and trade and class carried on at all points, and as deadly in its way as the war of nations ; is this the civilisation of which we boast when we scoff at the injustice of by-gone times, and hold ourselves so far above the past ? Or is it not rather a mirage which seems and is not ? But no man can find the remedy, and few care to seek it. We talk of heaven glibly enough, and profess to look forward to the better world with enthusiastic hope and faith ; but we strongly object to work for its realisation whilst we are on earth, and a political millennium is a dream that offends many a good Christian who pays his Easter dues without wincing.

The fact is, most of us want slaves that we ourselves may be free ; contented, fat, and sleek if it pleases Providence, but always slaves bound to work that we may play, and accepting our well-being as the full reward for their self-sacrifice. Men of courageous candour admit this, some sorrowfully, others with justifying reasoning. The hard-worked labourer with bended back and clouded brain ; the naked pitman with his women and children grimy, brutalised, unsexed ; the pallid mill-hand, spinning his own shroud as he draws out the silken threads that are to make a royal robe ; the toiling millions whose toil can scarcely get them bread—they are all parts of our civilisation ; integral parts ; and we see no way of doing without them. If one of the "upper classes," touched by their sorrows, proposes measures that shall raise them *au fond*, not only ameliorate the worst results of a radical evil, he is met by the terrified taunt that he seeks to ruin society. And to seek to ruin society is a shibboleth of illimitable power. He who desires to save man is always accused of this hostility to society ; and the maintenance of unrighteous conditions has somehow got to be considered as part of our social religion.

Down low, at the root of this flower of civilisation, lies the wire-worm of crime. After we have necessitated the criminal class, we punish it for being. We know why it is as clearly as we know why fever breaks out by uncleansed drains and round the borders of marsh-lands ; but we do nothing to hinder or to mend. We send the thief to prison, surely enough, but we do not care to offer him the chance of honesty ; holding punishment godlike but prevention impolitic. Of late, a certain fear of this seething mass of crime, boiling and bubbling in the depths, has set

our legislators to work, and we have begun to appoint Boards and build schools, like men in a fright, and hurried. But at the present moment things are standing still, that a free fight may go on over dogma. The patient is in *extremis*, but the doctors are quarrelling over the pattern of the cup in which the elixir of life is to be administered. This is one outcome of our civilisation; and we are proud of it. We hold it to be far more vital to the good of humanity that our roughs and gutter-children should have correct ideas about baptismal regeneration and the doctrine of election, than be taught honesty, sobriety, and decency of living. To our minds, true religion consists in formulas, not in state of life and morals; and we would rather our thieves and murderers continued and multiplied than see them abolished at the expense of correct doctrinal mysteries.

Our civilisation may have done much; but one thing it has not done, it has not destroyed cruelty. We are cruel to each other, cruel to animals, and cruel to all the weak. Strength claims its victims by its own righteousness, and our civilisation is built up on sacrifice. No one can see a child beaten for a fault it does not know to be a fault, hear a servant rated for an oversight, see a horse between the shafts, or a dog broken in, without a burning at his heart, and a passionate desire for the reality of the state in which we say we live. If we cannot alter the law of nature in its incessant destruction, its death that there may be life, at least we need not inflict pain out of season. There is no absolute necessity for the costermonger to work a raw on his donkey, for a coachman to lash his team till every nerve quivers with pain and terror, for a hound to be whipped out of all courage and consciousness that a horde of men in pink may hunt a miserable little hare to death, for horses to be spurred and strained and maybe break their backs or their hearts in what men call a steeplechase, and the gods a selfish cruelty. Children can be taught wisdom and goodness otherwise than by the cane, and if we really respected ourselves, we should respect our so-called social inferiors. Were we civilised, the sights and sounds which meet us twenty times in an hour in the street would be impossible. It is all savagery from first to last; and the brute assertion of strength is not civilisation.

Pass on to war, which is the culmination of this cruelty; pass on to the prayers for victory put up by nations, irrespective of the justice of their cause—to the thanksgiving offered after they have seized their enemy's lands, burned towns and villages, destroyed harvests and machinery, massacred women and children, peasants and peaceable craftsmen, and slain in fairer fight whole armies of brave and bountiful men. Then the victors march back to their jubilant homes, carrying their bloody flags into the cathedrals, where they shout out anthems of praise to the God of Love and the great Father of us all, for His grace in giving them strength to kill, ravage, and destroy their brothers and His sons. This is civilisation; and a victorious army would be scandalised in its deepest feelings if a public thanksgiving was not offered to God for what

is perhaps the gain of a bad cause, and the triumph of tyranny and injustice.

There can be no true civilisation while strife and selfishness continue. Yet what is it with us? We grudge all men's success, and fear it, because we want to secure our own only. We prefer competition to co-operation, save as an act of defence against a stronger enemy outside. But the co-operation which means mutual support and mutual self-sacrifice—the co-operation which is Christianity put into action—that we despise as a dream, and the preachers thereof as mischievous agitators. For we like high-sounding words; they are comforting to the mouth, and they obscure the sense. "To do justice, and to love mercy." We have scarcely mastered that lesson yet! But until we have, we know nothing of true civilisation. We are only lackered, not welded; hunchbacks beneath our coronation robes; barbarians posed for sages; pithecoids under the guise of men; and the devil's journeymen, calling God their master.

E. L. L.

ANOTHER VIEW.

OPTIMISTS and pessimists will probably divide this world between them as long as it lasts. We set the music of the spheres to our own words. The church bells in the old story chimed out to the inquiring bride the advice to marry her lover; and when experience had taught her better, the same chimes proclaimed with equal emphasis the more commonplace advice, don't. "Once I was hap-hap-happy; now I'm mis-s-s-erable," was the doleful burden which, as Mr. Carlyle somewhere tells us, rung in the ears of a listener to a supposed ghost, and when he came to know better, he found that it was nothing but a respectable smoke-jack, calmly rapping out its promise of a good dinner to its proprietor. Are not these things an allegory? Does a firm conviction that all things are going well mean much more than a conviction that we have a balance at our bankers'; or a lamentation over the sad fate of humanity imply any wider truth than this, that our liver is out of order? Think for a moment of the narrow limits of our knowledge: eight hundred millions of featherless bipeds, more or less, are picking up a living, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, on this petty planet of ours; of what infinitesimal proportion can you really unveil the secrets and gauge the virtues and the happiness? How many people do you know intimately enough to say whether their lot is, on the whole, enviable or the reverse? Every human being is a foreign kingdom to every other. We make short excursions into their minds; we touch at a port here and there; and we say glibly that we know them intimately. We know not how many dark corners are carefully hidden away from all strangers, and what vast provinces have never been reached in our most daring travels. Our reports are for the most

part as trustworthy as those summary judgments which a tourist passes upon France, Italy, and Germany, when he has taken a three months trip under Mr. Cook's protection. That amiable philosopher, Abraham Tucker, describes an imaginary visit to the next world, where he converses with Plato, Locke, and the great men of old days. In that region every soul is confined in a small bag, or "vehicle," and, by applying your own bag to your neighbour's, you become conscious of all the thoughts and emotions passing within him. Our bags are luckily not so sensitive. A man must be penetrating or presumptuous indeed, who can say of eight of his fellow-creatures that he has accurately calculated their value; and, even so, he would have gauged the lives of but one hundred-millionth part of his contemporaries. Nay, who can speak for himself? What arithmetic will enable us to sum up all our pains and our pleasures, to balance the account, and to say which preponderate? How much of our lives has already sunk into utter oblivion, from the days of our infancy to yesterday's forgotten hours? That we are not ready to commit suicide, even apart from religious motives, we generally know; but does the implicit judgment which seems to be involved really imply more than that an instinct of self-preservation is part of our inheritance from the past? If asked distinctly, Have you, on the whole, had more happiness or misery in this life? could you, remembering the narrow limits of your knowledge, give a confident reply? The answer is generally given from a rapid glance over a few memories, and is about as satisfactory as if a man should pronounce on the geological composition of a continent from examining the dust which has gathered on his clothes in a railway journey across it.

But go a step farther. Pronounce on your own merits; on the merits of your friends; on the merits of millions of your contemporaries; then decide upon the merits of the millions who have long since passed out of our sphere of communication, and say whether the race is on the whole better now than in former days. What will be the value of your judgment? It is, for example, but an infinitesimal proportion of the lives which passed in the classical times of which we have any record whatever. There are but a few of us who have studied those records, and but a small minority again who have the learning, the impartiality, and the powers of reason and imagination necessary to pass any verdict upon them. And yet nothing is more common than to hear the first half-taught smatterer in secondhand knowledge pronounce offhand upon the comparative merits of ancient and modern society. Can one listen without a contemptuous smile, remembering how vast a superstructure of supposed knowledge is reared on how miserably inadequate a foundation?

What, then, follows? Are we to be utterly sceptical as to all such statements—to deny that any one can speak confidently as to the happiness of the existence, and to deny still more emphatically that any one can say whether the race is progressing or deteriorating? Such a conclusion would be illogical; for, little as we know, some broad facts stand out

upon which certain general propositions may be fairly based. It may, however, be fairly inferred that all such sweeping statements should be made with modesty, and carefully tested before their truth is admitted. It is impossible to take up a newspaper without recognising the necessity of caution. Take a specimen or two at random :—An “Englishwoman,” we may suppose, writes to say that a miner has been kicking his wife to death with iron-clad boots. She infers that our present marriage law is merely a shield for the grossest brutality. A murder is undetected. “What,” shrieks a correspondent, “has become of the police?” A detected murderer is reprieved. “What throats are safe,” cries another, “if this tenderness to criminals be continued?” The Divorce Court is full of cases. Is not British morality a mere superficial varnish? Such cases prove undeniably that all men are not gentle, that the police is not omniscient, that Home Secretaries are not infallible, and that marriages are not invariably happy. They prove, that is, that the millennium has not arrived; which, indeed, may be taken as on the whole a generally recognised truth. But what more do they prove? The real process of thought in those indignant correspondents is sufficiently obvious. Because some hideous fact has been suddenly forced upon their attention, they assume that it has suddenly sprung into existence. The abstract proposition that so many murders take place every year never troubled them; the occurrence of a single concrete murder, put vividly before their eyes, has sent a shudder through their frames, and they fancy that the whole world must be reeling. When my house takes fire, I naturally assume that the general conflagration is beginning. This mode of reasoning, however, is not strictly logical. Before a general inference can be drawn from a single fact, we must plunge into those arid regions of statistics from which most people recoil in horror. A murder has been committed. There never was a time, since the days of Cain, when that statement might not have been made with accuracy—

Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born;

and could we but look through the world, there is never a moment when some murderer is not approaching his victim or consummating his crime. A murder has not been detected; but in the long catalogue of crime, if it were fairly set out, the cases in which murder has falsified the old proverb would be lamentably numerous in proportion to the number of verifications. In short, the one vital question is that which people obstinately refuse to examine. We should not ask whether the recording angel has still some work on his hands, but whether his work is accumulating; whether that dismal cry of agony which is always steaming up from the earth swells in volume and in intensity; and swells more rapidly than the cry of thanksgiving for the many happy lives which are being led beneath the sun. Our civilisation a hollow sham because it has not extirpated crime and misery! Are we, or are any of us, already angels that we shall measure ourselves by such a standard? Are the waters of the deluge

still deep? To that question there can be but one answer; but the real question, and the only one which much concerns us, is whether they are subsiding. Our lives are poor and mean indeed as tested by any severe measure. The old savage instincts are at most cowed into comparative submission; rough brutal passions hide themselves under a thin veneering of decorum; vice, in losing its grossness, does not lose half its evil; freedom from direct violence does not imply a genuine freedom of the soul. Men and women may be bought and sold, though no slave-markets are open, and material fetters are unknown. To these and to many other counts of the ordinary indictment against modern civilisation, we must plead guilty; and in some respects we must even confess that our gains have been balanced by undeniable losses. The childhood of the race, like the childhood of the individual, has its charms; and we can no more reproduce Homeric poetry than a middle-aged man can prattle as gracefully as an infant. Whether the power of making steam-engines is a good exchange for the power of writing epic poems is a question not to be settled offhand; but clearly progress is not all clear gain.

Can we, however, take comfort even whilst admitting our errors? We freely admit, nay, we emphatically assert, that we cannot join that noisy chorus which deafens all ears with its complacent pæans over modern progress—it is blatant and silly enough. But yet we can't quite join in the sneers at material advances which are now the fashion. We have a weakness for railways and telegraphs. And, to quit that doubtful ground, we see something hopeful even in the lamentations which take their place. What is the meaning of these complaints of the hollowness and emptiness of our civilisation? Must we assume that they are in any sense well founded? Nothing would be easier, were it worth while, than to put together a whole catena of such mournful judgments. Since the first dawn of literature men have been complaining that the world was growing worse. In every age, patriots and poets have pathetically declared that their fathers, worse than their grandfathers, have borne children worse than themselves, to produce a still more vicious progeny. Take those patriots and poets at their word, and there never was a time when luxury was not sapping the old masculine virtues and corrupting the ancient simplicity. The queen's old courtier, as the song tells us, was more hospitable, simple, and vigorous than the fop who stood in his shoes. Each succeeding generation has translated the sentiment into its own dialect. If only their sayings had been preserved, one cannot doubt that the men of the bronze age looked back with fond regret to the days when their simpler ancestors had been content with stone implements; and it was felt to be a proof of effeminate degradation when clothes superseded paint. And, yet—here we are. Not a very glorious spectacle, it may be, to the angels; but still with a possession or two which we should be sorry to lose.

Such complaints, in fact, prove one thing, and only prove one thing conclusively. They prove that the better men of any given time can con-

ceive of a state of things far better than that which has been realised. In all ages voyages have been made to Utopia; and the returning travellers have compared that country with their own, much, as is only natural, to the disadvantage of the latter. Whenever that process becomes impossible, complaints will cease, and progress will cease also, for the actual will have overtaken the ideal, and men be unable to suggest any improvement in the existing state of things. Our cattle, so far as we know, never complain that the world is not as it should be; and for that reason they do not make any perceptible advances. A complaint may therefore be one of two things; it may be produced equally by the pains of growth or by the pains of decay. Progress has not been continuous, and there have been periods at which whole nations were gradually sinking back into barbarism instead of advancing. But there have also been times when indignant protests against existing evils were the symptoms of an awakened conscience and a nobler spirit stirring in society, or the proofs that a society, overbalanced by some sudden accession of wealth or power, had not yet adapted itself to the new conditions. If progress were always uniform and equally diffused, we should never be jolted; unluckily, society moves by jerks and starts. The race outgrows its strength and feels its burdens too heavy for a time; or it waxes fat and snaps its ancient fetters too suddenly; and, in either case, it suffers accordingly and declares that the whole world is out of joint. To determine what is the meaning of such complaints at the present day would be to expound a complete philosophy of history. Perhaps we had better not attempt that task within half a dozen paragraphs. One or two examples, however, may suggest that mere shrieking is as much out of place as unqualified exultation.

Some twenty years ago we were all proclaiming that peace and goodwill were finally triumphant on earth. True, we were still surrounded by the wrecks of recent wars and revolutions, but then had we not built the biggest of all recorded glass sheds, and opened it to the shopkeepers of all nations? War, the prophets told us, was to disappear forthwith. The prophets were wrong, as we all know. The Great Exhibition produced South Kensington, but it did not bring in the millennium. A disappointment so impossible to foresee gave a corresponding shock. A cold fit has succeeded the hot fit. Our civilisation, we exclaim, must be a mere sham; we are still barbarians capable of cutting each other's throats; the bad passions are not mere things of the past; we have set it down in our tablets that men may smile and smile, and be villains. Nay, they may write Sanskrit and not be above a little looting. German professors are not angels with pipes and spectacles, and the French Emperor was not an incarnation of all the virtues.

Whatever may be said of our civilisation, the brag which was common in 1851 was clearly empty enough. But is not the disappointment rather infantile? Do we not rather resemble children who have put on paper wings, and who weep when they find that they can't fly like the

birds? Could any sane people really expect that the demon of war was to be exorcised so speedily and so quietly? Only by long and severe discipline can the patient be freed from such possession. The education of the race is a slow, if a sure process; and the lifetime of a generation is but a day in the history of humanity. You can't flog a boy into good manners in twenty-four hours, nor the world into peacefulness in thirty years. War will cease when one of two things happens—when there are no quarrels in which men care enough to fight; or when some power has moral weight enough to impose its judgment upon the world. That we should become too indifferent to fight is scarcely desirable; and to construct an international tribunal requires, not the passing of an Act of Parliament, but the development of a new set of instincts. Meanwhile, setting aside idle dreams and idle complaints that bubbles will burst, have we not on the whole made some definite progress? War is, and always must be, horrible, even if war has been an essential element of civilisation. But at least wars are speedier than of old. One short, tremendous death-grapple replaces the long smouldering struggles which demoralised whole races, and whose material effects might be traced for generations. The shock to the nervous system is less as the operation is quicker. The late continental wars have startled us from our dreams, and we have shrieked distractedly. But compare them calmly with previous wars, with the Revolutionary Wars or the Seven Years' War; go back to the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, or to the fearful desolation caused by the English invasions of France; to say nothing of earlier days when wholesale massacres or the enslavement of whole populations were regular incidents of war, and it is simply absurd to deny the vastness of the change. Non-combatants suffer still, but their sufferings are not deliberately intended and conceived. Atrocities are incidentally committed; the novelty is that they give scandal. If there had been newspaper correspondents even with the English armies in the Peninsula, to say nothing of more distant days, they could have told a story or two which Napier has been content to leave to our imaginations. Passing over disputable details, the broad fact is undeniable that though war has not been suppressed, and though people can never be blown to fragments with much comfort to themselves, the evils have been gradually localised and limited, and wanton injury restricted by a greater respect for that vague entity which we call public opinion. If a village is burnt, the burners are at least forced to exculpate themselves; in good old times the incident would have been too trifling to be noticed. Our civilisation is not a sham, for it implies a weakening as certainly as it does not imply an extirpation of the old brutal passions. Something is gained when evil-doers begin to be put on their defence, though they may still be triumphant. The outcry which they ridicule as mere sentimental nonsense, is in truth but the rudimentary stage of a sentiment which will one day be powerful enough to enforce obedience.

Or take another favourite topic. Society, we are told, is tyrannical

and conventional. Our system of education is preposterous ; women are still condemned to be frivolous, and marriage is a process of buying and selling, instead of a union of harmonious souls ; even our dress, the arrangement of our houses and our modes of eating and drinking, offend against all sanitary laws. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the complaints are well-founded, what do they prove ? That we are all hypocrites, and our institutions mere shams ; or, rather, that the process of embodying new ideas in corresponding social arrangements is at best a slow one ? Conventionality is a term for a set of rules surviving as a provisional arrangement when the reason for them has disappeared. We must stick to our old awkward clothes till somebody has devised and made popular a convenient and harmonious dress. We still break sanitary laws, but it is a novelty to believe that there are such laws. Our ancestors would have shrieked at a tub, and sat contentedly over cesspools and amidst filth that would have turned our stomachs. Cleanliness and good drainage cannot be introduced at a bound, and yet we have done something ; for, as we are generally told, we now preserve many lives which had better be allowed to disappear. Indeed, half our grievances result less from absence of the reforming spirit than from a hasty application of half understood principles.

Women, again, are ill taught, as even the most conservative will admit, but it is no longer an accepted axiom, as in the days of *Clarissa Harlowe*, that needlework should be their sole artistic employment. Marriage, it may be, is often a mercenary arrangement ; though some of us fancy that the young men and maidens of the present generation err much more frequently on the side of imprudence than on the side of cold calculation, and that, throughout the largest classes of society, motives of mere rank and money are rather the exception than the rule. But here, again, the novelty consists in the notion that romantic motives should be seriously taken into account. Poor *Clarissa* reproached herself with filial impiety in daring to dispute the most tyrannical decision of her parents ; and a marriage treaty, in her days, was avowedly negotiated exclusively on business principles, though benevolent domestic rulers might make some gracious condescension to the feelings of their subjects. According to some people, we are blundering out of one excess into another, and making third-rate men out of second-rate women. Be that as it may, the complaints indicate fresh development and not decay. They mean that women are waking to loftier thoughts and cherishing nobler aspirations than of old. Their efforts may be ill-advised ; they may be walking unsteadily when deprived of the old supports ; but at least the discontent is the best guarantee for their improvement. The abstract woman, as she appears in the perorations of stump-orators, may be not a very edifying personage, but she should not be allowed to hide from our sight the real flesh and blood woman whose efforts, even when feeble and blundering, should surely be rather pathetic than ludicrous.

It is grotesque enough to make flying shots at subjects so vast and so

complicated; yet a word or two may possibly indicate that discontent may be in all these cases a hopeful symptom. It indicates hopes outrunning the rate of actual progress; and, at worst, a pardonable impatience at their tardy realization. A society moving rapidly, increasing in wealth and in knowledge, finding at every step that the old formulæ are no longer exhaustive, and the old bonds no longer able to endure the new strain, must of necessity be discontented. We may imagine a state of things in which custom will be merely an expression of reason; in which the application of brute force to men or to nations will be superseded by the spontaneous deference to the judgment of the wisest; in which social arrangements being perfect, there will be no longer room for class jealousies and idle pretensions; in which all men will agree in first principles of religion and art, and harmonious variety replace mere jarring discords; in which selfish luxury will go out of fashion, because public spirit will lead all men to dedicate their superfluous means and energy to the public service; and in which our lives will be regulated on the soundest theories of moral and physical hygienics. To construct such Utopias is not altogether a fruitless practice, for it encourages aspirations towards something better than the clumsy set of makeshift arrangements by which we somehow or other contrive to scramble through life without cutting our own or our neighbours' throats. Yet to dwell upon such dreams—for dreams they must be for long generations to come—implies a lively discontent with the present; and if the discontent is not to degenerate into mere peevishness, instead of active desire for improvement, we can derive the best hopes for the future by dwelling upon the conquests of the past. Those conquests are real enough, much as they have been obscured by the blatant rhetoric which a certain school has chosen to pour out for the self-glorification of Philistines. To recognize them calmly and sensibly is probably healthier in the long run than to meet optimist extravagance by equal extravagance of the pessimist variety. We may be quietly hopeful without being offensively jubilant over our own inconceivable merits. The error intrudes only when our belief in the improvement of the species leads us to turn away our eyes from the vast mass of evil against which we have still to struggle.

Beyond any of the topics we have noticed lies a far more ominous and less soluble question. The most determined optimist cannot deny that society is going through a long and perilous transformation. The vast multitudes in whom poverty crushes out all independence and all hopefulness, the wide alienation between classes, the inability of old faith and old social arrangements to cope with the ominous difficulties that seem to thicken around us, the partial distribution of the benefits arising from modern civilisation, constitute so many dangers which can neither be overlooked nor extenuated. The prospect before us is veiled in clouds and darkness. It would be easy, as it would be superfluous, to make lists of hopeful or of discouraging symptoms, and to point triumphantly to the result as a justification of almost any fore-

cast. The pessimist may assert that we are being whirled helplessly into the abysses, and that to be cheerful is simply to be hysterical. Pointing to the ruins of Paris, he may ask what kind of volcanic elements are surging beneath the crust of society ; and we may find it difficult to give a conclusive answer. Statistics, indeed, are not wanting on the other side. We may repeat for the thousandth time the story of the Rochdale pioneers, or prove, in a thousand ways, that the lower classes are showing symptoms of increased intelligence and fitness to be trusted with power. The question is too vast even to hint an opinion as to its most probable solution. We cannot ask whether, here too, a more favourable interpretation may be placed upon the ordinary lamentations. The complaints to which we listen are too serious to be easily dismissed, and through them runs at times an ominous tone as of solemn forewarning. This much, however, may be said : all passionate generalisations are apt to be mistaken. Miracles are worked by faith, and we shall meet our troubles best, whatever they may be, by having a certain amount of confidence in our neighbours. Look at the black side of things, and nothing is easier than to prove that the world is rotten to the core and can only be cured by a thorough-going social, political, religious, artistic, and scientific revolution. Such predictions, however, help to verify themselves, and, on the whole, it is best to keep our heads cool and to refrain from a summary judgment either way. The chances are that it will be as hopelessly wrong as every uninspired prophecy. Nobody's views of his own generation are worth much, and his views of generations to come are worth less. Let us, within the little sphere accessible to us, judge as fairly as we can, and give people credit for a few good qualities. They have them sometimes : at any rate, it is not only pleasanter, but more conducive to successful action, to go forwards without trembling at every step, lest the ground should be undermined, and the explosion just coming.

W. B.

New Rome.*

LINES WRITTEN FOR MISS STORY'S ALBUM.

THE armless Vatican Cupid
Hangs down his beautiful head;
For the priests have got him in prison,
And Psyche long has been dead.

But see, his shaven oppressors
Begin to quake and disband;
And *The Times*, that bright Apollo,
Proclaims salvation at hand.

"And what," cries Cupid, "will save us?"
Says Apollo: "*Modernise Rome!*
What inns! Your streets, too, how narrow!
Too much of palace and dome!

"O learn of London, whose paupers
Are not pushed out by the swells!
Wide streets with fine double trottoirs,
And then—the London hotels!"

The armless Vatican Cupid
Hangs down his head as before.
Through centuries past it has hung so,
And will through centuries more.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

* See *The Times* of April 15th.

Some Literary Ramblings about Bath.

II.

READING Miss Austen's stories (*Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*) after Smollett's epistolary novel, one can not help deriving from them a clear conception of the increased refinement of English society in general, and the improvements of Bath and its customs in particular. The local colouring of both is, doubtless, faithful in the extreme, though some might suspect a tinge of caricature in the older work. But we must go back to a time antecedent to the days of Matthew Bramble to see what—apart from the matter of bathing, of which I have written so fully—were the improvements for the accommodation of visitors. Mr. Wood, the architect, who knew more than any one else about the improvements and improvers (*quorum pars magna fuit*), says that it was between the years 1727 and 1748 that such great alterations in the public accommodation of Bath were effected, "that it would appear next to Romantick to relate them, were they not well known to thousands of living witnesses." He gives an account of these alterations, beginning with the statement that, "about the year 1727, the boards of the dining-rooms and most other floors were made of a brown colour with soot and small beer to hide the dirt as well as their own imperfections; and if the walls of any of the rooms were covered with wainscot, it was with such as was mean, and never painted." But about 1748, the rooms were wainscoted, and painted in a costly manner, "carpets were introduced to cover the floor," "walnut-tree chairs, some with leather, some with damask or worked bottoms, supplied the place of such as were seated with cane and rushes," and "beds, window-curtains, and other chamber furniture . . . grew better and better, 'till it became suitable even for people of the highest rank." Princess Amelia, daughter of George II., visited Bath more than once in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The Prince of Orange* came here about the same time; and a few years later Frederick Prince of Wales and his Royal Consort honoured the city with their presence.† These events may

* The waters are said to have cured the Prince—an event commemorated by Nash on an obelisk, erected on a spot of ground near the Abbey, and now called "Orange Grove."

† Nash also put up a pillar in Queen Square commemorative of this Prince's visit, and got Pope to write an inscription for it. Any schoolboy might have written a better one. It speaks of benefits conferred on the city—what they were is not very clear. Lord Hervey described the Prince as "a poor weak, irresolute, false, lying, dishonest, contemptible wretch; that nobody loves, that nobody believes, that nobody will trust, that will trust everybody by turns; will impose upon, betray, mislead, and plunder."

have expedited the improvements to which the visit of Queen Anne gave the first stimulus. But still the houses themselves were bad, and it was as necessary to erect new edifices as to improve the old. Fortunately there was a man of energy and ability on the scene eager to push forward the work of structural improvement. This was Mr. Wood, the architect, from whose book I have so frequently quoted. He made clearances and openings, caused noxious alleys and filthy stable-yards to disappear from the heart of the city, let in light and air, cleansed and purified, and prepared magnificent sites for streets, terraces, and squares.

His first great work was Queen Square. Even that prince of grumblers, Matthew Bramble, had no fault to find with it—though he condemned some of Wood's later works. "I was impatient," he wrote, "to see the boasted improvements in architecture for which the upper parts of the Town have been so much celebrated. The square (Queen's Square) is on the whole pretty well laid out, spacious, open and airy, and in my opinion by far the most wholesome and agreeable situation in Bath. . . . The Circus is a pretty bauble contrived for show and looks like Vespasian's Amphitheatre turned outside in The only entrance to it through Gay Street, is so difficult, steep and slippery that in wet weather it must be exceedingly dangerous, both for those that ride in carriages and those that walk a-foot; and when the street is covered with snow, as it was for fifteen days successively this very winter, I don't see how any individual could go either up or down without the most imminent danger of broken bones." I am afraid that Gay Street* is still obnoxious to this reproach. It is not pleasant to ascend it, and it is still less pleasant to descend it, when snow is on the pavement. But the steepness of the ascent has been long since outdone by other precipitous heights which in these days the inhabitants of Bath are condemned to climb. I believe that the residents soon get used to these Alpine ascents. I have heard them say that it is less fatiguing to them to walk up and down hill than on level ground—an adaptation to insuperable circumstances at which I have not yet arrived.

Time and increasing strength, however, might help one to take less account of the evil, and to ascend the uppermost heights of Lansdown without bated breath. Certain it is that the residences on the hill-sides or the hill-tops are most in demand. "The same artist," says Matthew Bramble, "who planned the Circus has likewise projected a crescent; when that is finished we shall probably have a star, and those who are living thirty years hence may perhaps see all the signs of the Zodiac exhibited in architecture at Bath." We have not now all the signs of the

* As there are a Quiet Street, a Cheap Street, &c. &c. in Bath, I thought that the name of *Gay* was given to this street, as illustrative of its character in former days; but I find that it was named after a Mr. Gay (a doctor in Hatton Garden), who owned the land on which it was built. *Trim Street* was also called after a Mr. Trim. *Quiet Street* was so called "from the meek temper of a washerwoman espoused to one of the builders."

Zodiac in architectural formations ; but we have crescent above crescent, and terrace above terrace, planted here and there on the hill-side, with picturesque informality—excellent residences with magnificent views. They are a long way off from the business part of the city—from the baths, the markets, and the shops. This was a complaint formerly made against the Circus, which now seems to be in the very centre of the town. But permanent residents reconcile themselves to this inconvenience ; they seldom take the waters, and the tradesmen's carts do their marketing. I have heard them, however, say that visitors are badly treated, as there are no hotels or lodging-houses in the upper part of the city. I doubt, however, whether visitors much care to be perched upon the top of a hill, far away from the bustle of the people. If they are invalids, they wish to be near the baths, and whether invalids or not, they "like to see what is going on." It is questionable whether a grand hotel on the summit of Lansdowne would answer as well as that which has been erected on the site of the old "White Hart," opposite the Pump Room, and communicating with the best appointed baths in the place.

Queen Square, it has been seen, was, in the days of Matthew Bramble, accounted the upper part of the city. In those days Milsom Street was unknown.* It is now the great thoroughfare from everywhere to everywhere, and everyone goes to it for everything. Bath, indeed, would be nothing without Milsom Street. Long before I had ever visited the beautiful city—"Queen of the West"—I had heard in my schoolboy days of Milsom Street ; but I first trod its pavements in the full flush of my manhood. It is the Regent Street of Bath on a small scale ; and like Regent Street, it is on an incline. The houses were originally constructed for private residences by a builder who gave his name to the street—but now they are all shops. There are none better in England. I am told that one side, the right-hand side as you ascend, is called the "shilling side" and the left, the "half-crown side," even as there is a "right side" and a "wrong side" to Oxford Street. In winter and spring the shilling side is the pleasanter of the two as it is the more sunny. The more fashionable shops are, as may be supposed, on the "half-crown side," the distinction being supposed to indicate the difference in the prices at which goods are charged. The hypothesis is not correct ; but it may truthfully be asserted that on the two sides of the street you may buy almost anything that you want at a lower price than you can obtain articles of the same quality in London. It is a famous street for shopping. In the middle of the day it is crowded with pedestrian residents, and with the carriages of visitors from the country. There is a well-known pastrycook's shop on the half-crown side—now grown, by the progressive tendencies of the age, into an excellent restaurant, where you can lunch frugally or sumptuously, as the state of your digestion or your purse may suggest. The poem in *Anstey's New Bath Guide*, written in honour of

* Milsom Street was built in 1764.

"Mr. Gill, an eminent cook at Bath," might well, *mutato nomine*, be inscribed to Mr. Fortt, the Gill of the present day, the Gunter of the West. From this "palace of dainty delights" go forth to distant parts of the country all that can gladden the inner man—wedding-breakfasts and ball-suppers that might have come from Berkeley Square. I should be afraid to say how many hundred pounds of wedding-cake went out from this emporium on the occasion of a recent marriage in the city. Bath has been famous for good living for more than a century. There is no doubt that Wood, the architect, was not altogether a disinterested witness; but what he wrote a hundred and twenty years ago, may well be believed from the indications of the present. "Our mutton is celebrated, and that which is really fed upon our Downs, has a flavour beyond comparison; our butter can not be exceeded, the herbage in the neighbourhood being sweet; the housewifery neat and clean. And we have fish in great plenty, as fresh and as good as even the greatest epicure can desire. So that if good provisions may be called an addition to the pleasures of any place, Bath will yield to none on this point."

Nash lived long enough to totter up Milsom Street. Perhaps he had the sagacity to predict that such a thoroughfare from the lower to the upper part of the city must have the effect in time of rendering the latter the fashionable quarter of Bath. The vastly improved accommodation brought down increased numbers of visitors, and there was an upward tendency which soon proved fatal to the gaieties in the neighbourhood of the Pump Room. There were Masters of the Ceremonies long after Nash's time—but not one attained to his acknowledged sovereignty. Mr. Heavside appears to have succeeded him: Captain Wade made some figure in his vocation, and his picture was painted by Gainsborough, who resided for many years in Bath. Mr. Tyson and Mr. King also achieved considerable popularity in their time, and doubtless others with whose names I am not acquainted. The last M.C. of whom I can find any record is Colonel Jervois, who presided when Louis Napoleon visited Bath in 1846. But I believe that the office finally died out in the person of a Mr. Nugent.

The new Assembly Rooms in the upper part of the town, near the Circus, were built by the son of Wood the architect, in 1771. The edifice has no claim to architectural merit. It is a low straggling building which you might take for an auction mart. But it was wise to sacrifice nothing to external display. The interior arrangements are simply perfect. It would be difficult to name another suite of rooms, from one end of England to the other, which fulfil so admirably all the requirements of a ball—including dancing, eating, and flirting. I have seen nearly a thousand people in the rooms, without the least appearance of crowding. There is always ample space for all who would dance, or walk, or sit, or eat—which is more than can be said of any other assembly rooms with which I am acquainted throughout the kingdom. The card-room, for many years, had always numerous occupants, and play ran high. Miss Burney, in

Evelina, makes Lord Orville say, "The Bath amusements have a sameness in them which, after a short time, renders them rather insipid; but the greatest objection that can be made to the place is the encouragement it gives to gamblers." As in *Humphrey Clinker*, no yearly dates are affixed to the letters of which the novel is composed. But as *Evelina* was published in 1778, we may surmise that the period referred to is the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Whist is not now-a-days an extinct institution at Bath, but there is not much high play.

But Lower Bath did not suffer itself to be wholly extinguished without a struggle; and for a time music and dancing flourished at both ends of the city. It was supposed that there was room enough for two houses of fashionable entertainment, especially as Lower Bath had stretched itself out magnificently, and soon boasted of some of the best streets and houses in the place.* This has been well told in verse by one of the best of Anstey's followers:—

For know—that the kingdom that Nash ruled alone
Has long been considered too mighty for one.
When the paltry parades could contain the Beau Monde,
And the square was the end with the country beyond,
One monarch with ease the dominion could fill.
But lo! a new nation starts up on the hill—
Ashamed to look little, the regions below
Swelled out on each side with a terrace or row;
The place was divided, divided the power,
The city was split into Upper and Lower;
Till finding at last one monarch too few,
Like Sparta and Brentford, 'twas governed by two.
And then we'd two rooms, two places to sing,
Two places to dance, and two everything;
The masters tho' rivals walked on hand in hand,
And never encroached on each other's command.

But this state of things does not appear to have lasted very long. The lower rooms were gradually deserted. Perhaps they had never greatly enjoyed the patronage of "persons of quality." So, as I have said, the Upper City triumphed; and now all the gaiety has gone up the hill. As the waters can not do the same, the Pump Room maintains a languid existence. It is rather a tradition than a fact. I do not think that I have seen more than three people drinking there at the same time. There are occasional promenade concerts, which can scarcely be called lively, and which do not seem to be much patronised by the local aristocracy. There is scarcely, indeed, anywhere a trace of the Bath of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more." When Lord Chelsea was addressing an election meeting the other day in this city, he observed with reference to his own position as a candidate for its representation, that it had been said, "Bath wants no strangers." Upon which a voice from the crowd cried out, "Yes, she does; she wants

* Pulteney Street and Sydney Place contain probably the best houses in Bath though the property therein is greatly deteriorated.

thousands of them." Bath is a beautiful residentiary city—but it has ceased to be the resort of the stranger. The last royal personage—or rather the last Majesty—who visited Bath, was Queen Charlotte, who was here in 1817. She lived in Sydney Place, and held levees in the Pump Room. Accompanied by the Princess Elizabeth, the Queen arrived on the 3rd of November, and was greeted by a general illumination of the city. The Princess Charlotte died on the morning of the 6th, and her Majesty returned to Windsor on the 8th, and on the 24th again set out for Bath. Her present Majesty, as Princess Victoria, was here in 1830, accompanied by the Duchess of Kent, and inaugurated the opening of Victoria Park—the greatest improvement that Bath has seen during its two centuries of progressive improvement. And as I write the hearts of the people are stirred by loyal thoughts of a possible visit from her eldest son, when that beautiful park will be the scene of great floral festivities under the auspices of the Horticultural Society.

Quin, the actor, said that Bath was a nice easy place to die in, and years afterwards Walter Savage Landor described it as a "most easy place" to live in. I am inclined to think that it is one of the easiest places in the world (barring the hills) if you have nothing to do. But if work enters into your calculations you will find it difficult to do it. Wilberforce described it "as the worst of all places for getting any business done." "You are required," he wrote, in 1825, "to second the influence of the waters, before, between, and after the glasses by a liberal quantity of air and exercise; and if, in despite of the doctors, you go to your desk, you cannot write for five minutes without a rat-tat by the knocker, reminding you that you are in a huge city in which it is the practice to carry on most diligently an incessant system of calling and carding, against which both payers and receivers inveigh." I am quite in a position to state that this is as true at the present time as it was some fifty years ago. Scarcely any hour of the day is held sacred by the visitor. You may have your meditations disturbed—your pen arrested—at any time from 10 till 6 o'clock. And why not? It is a pleasure city. You have no business to come here to work.

People may find their pleasure here in very different ways. For my own part I think that the chief delight of Bath is the wealth of its literary and historical associations. I have not explored remote periods. I leave such inquiries to more learned and laborious writers than myself. A century is almost enough for me. Two centuries form the limits of any satisfactory inquiry, for beyond them we go into regions of conjecture. In these days, great statesmen do not come down to Bath to recruit their health. Nor do great authors pitch their tents here. But it would require volumes to write of all who have resided here in past times distinguished in the world of Politics and Literature, and now gratefully remembered. As to the statesmen, I may leave them to Mr. Murch, who has recently delivered an interesting lecture, since printed, on the connection of the Elder and the Younger Pitts with the city. As I write he is in

a fair way to be added to the list of their successors as a representative of Bath. If Members were appointed after competitive examinations in the history, resources, &c. &c. of the county or borough to be represented, Mr. Murch, whatever the number of competitors, would be tolerably certain to score the greatest number of marks.*

Thinking over the history of the literary coteries of Bath, it is impossible not to recognise Ralph Allen as one of the central figures. I fancy that there are many who have no acquaintance with that name, but who well know the "Squire Allworthy" of Fielding's memorable novel. I think, therefore, that I will begin by saying something about the author of *Tom Jones*. Of Fielding's connexion with Bath very vague accounts are given by his biographers. That he, or some members of his family, resided in a neighbouring village, now known as Twerton, but formerly called Tiverton, is certain. It is anything but a picturesque or attractive place, or one in which a man of taste would choose his residence. There is a little row of little houses in it called "Fielding's Buildings," and there is a house, now devoted to the sale of groceries, pointed out as Henry Fielding's residence. Local historians say that in it he composed *Tom Jones*. The probability is that he wrote this famous story, which was long under his pen, in many different houses. Chalmers' *Biographical Dictionary* intimates that it was written whilst Fielding was a stipendiary magistrate. "Amidst all the laborious duties of his office," it is said, "his imagination could not lie still, but he found leisure to amuse himself, and afterwards the world, with the *History of Tom Jones*." But as Fielding was appointed to the magistracy in December, 1748, and *Tom Jones* was published in February, 1749, this is rather an unfortunate conjecture. It is said, too, that whilst he resided at Twerton, he went every day to dine with Ralph Allen at Prior Park; but it is a long walk from Twerton to Prior Park, with a severe hill at the end of it, and the regularity of his attendance at the good squire's table at that time is to be doubted. But it is not to be doubted that Allen was a steady friend and benefactor to Fielding, and that the novelist passed many days and nights under the roof of the excellent man, whom he has immortalised in the character of "Squire Allworthy."† The portrait is

* Notwithstanding his local knowledge and influence, Mr. Murch was defeated. He will, doubtless, find consolation in the thought that he will have more time to devote to literature.

† Fielding's sister Sarah lived, I believe, at Twerton. It is certain that she died at or near Bath, in 1768, after long residence in the neighbourhood. She was an authoress of some popularity in her time. She wrote a novel called *Adventures of David Simple in search of a Faithful Friend*. Did this suggest to Captain Marryat the titles of two of his works? It is stated that Ralph Allen endowed this lady with an annuity of 100*l*. It is also recorded that Fielding's wife died at Twerton. There is a story told by Mr. Hunter of the Record Office, on the authority of "old Mr. Howse, of Lyncombe" (and to be found in Mr. Kelvert's book), to the effect that Fielding appeared at a party on the same day. On a friend observing to him that he was glad to see him, as there was a report in Bath that his wife had died that morn-

scarcely exaggerated; for never had Bath a son of whom she had such good reason to be proud. His memory is still held in veneration by those who know his story, and his name is often on the lips of men who little know what he did to deserve the praises of posterity. A driver of a hack-carriage from Bath will seldom pass Claverton churchyard without saying, "That is where Ralph Allen was buried."

The wealthy proprietor of Prior Park—which is now a Roman Catholic institution—was altogether a self-made man. Pope, when he wished to call him "low-born Allen," in the famous couplet, the second line of which is quoted by thousands who know not of whom it was written, was, perhaps, more truthful than complimentary.* His father was a Cornish innkeeper, who obtained for him, through a relative, a small situation in the Post-Office at St. Colomb's. Thence he was promoted to a clerkship in the Bath Post-Office. This clerkship was a stepping-stone to fortune. Young Allen was a staunch Royalist, and it is conjectured that he first recommended himself to Government by detecting some suspicious correspondence relating to the importation of arms into Bath in aid of the first Jacobite rebellion.† He carried his intelligence to General Wade, who then commanded the Royalist troops in the city. Those were critical times, when service of this kind was not likely to be neglected. Ralph Allen was, by the favourable representation of the General, made post-master of Bath; and it is added that Wade enhanced the favour he had conferred on his protégé by "marrying him to his natural daughter, Miss Earl."

So, by one stroke of good service to the State, Allen gained a good wife and a good post. It is only right to say that he had as much reason to be grateful to General Wade for the one favour as for the other. Fielding writes of Squire Allworthy that "he had in his youth married a very worthy and beautiful woman, of whom he had been extremely fond,"—and there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the picture. As chief of the post-office his enterprise was conspicuous; and he obtained profitable contracts which laid the foundation of his fortune.‡ His

ing, "It is very true," was the reply; "and that is the very reason I have come into town to join the pleasure party"—words which are susceptible of two interpretations, but which, probably, were not spoken at all.

* The word "low-born" was altered into "humble," and the couplet now stands,—

Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,

Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.

† Harington, as quoted by Dr. Tunstall, says, "When the rebellion burst out, a numerous jarto in Bath took most active measures to aid the insurrection in the West of England; and Mr. Carte, the minister of the Abbey Church, when Allen detected the plot, was glad to escape from the constables by leaping from a window in full canonicals."

‡ There are different stories about these contracts. Dr. Tunstall says that Allen farmed the cross-posts for twenty-one years at 6,000*l.* per annum, and afterwards for 20,000*l.* per annum; but in the Appendix to the very interesting volume of *Miscellanies*, by the Rev. Mr. Kelvert, of Bath, mentioned above, which has been placed in my hands since this paper was written, there is a memorandum by Allen's clerk of

energy and ability were as conspicuous as his integrity, and he obtained a moral ascendancy over his fellow-citizens to which he was fairly entitled and which he never abused. He was, as I have said, a staunch Royalist, and in the rebellion of '45 he raised and equipped a body of a hundred volunteers at his own charges. Whilst Allen was aiding the Protestant Government with his purse, Fielding was helping it with his pen. As editor of the *True Patriot* he fought the Hanoverian battle with great constancy and fidelity. Among other papers, he published (in January, 1746) an imaginary chronicle of events, written on the hypothesis of the success of the Stuarts, in which there is this entry:—"March 4.—An eminent physician fined 200 marks to the King's Bench, for an innuendo at Button's that Bath water was preferable to holy water." It was about this time, probably, that Fielding conceived the character of Squire Western, seasoning the man's brutality with frequent maledictions showered on the "Hanoverian Rats."

It was characteristic, both of the enterprise and the benevolence of Ralph Allen, that he should have determined to prove the sincerity of his faith in the excellent qualities of the Bath freestone by causing a magnificent edifice to be constructed for himself out of materials systematically maligned by the London builders.* They compared the freestone to "Cheshire cheese, liable to breed maggots that would soon devour it." And our friend Matthew Bramble said of the Circus and other houses newly-erected in his time—"They are built so slight, with the soft crumbling stone found in this neighbourhood, that I should never sleep quietly in one of them when it blowed (as the sailors say) a capfull of wind; and I am persuaded that my hind, Roger Williams, or any man of equal strength, would be able to push his foot through the strongest part of their walls without any great exertion of his muscles." "Time's great daughter, Truth," has fully refuted this; for after more than a hundred years the houses are as firm as ever, and it may blow great guns without the sleep of the most timid being disturbed. Still, prejudices ran so strongly against the Bath freestone at the time, that Allen, who had not only invested large sums of money in the quarries on Combe Down, but had a sincere desire to develop to the utmost the industrial activity of the neighbourhood,—determined, with the help of a local architect (our

the works, to the effect that the contract for the cross-posts was in the first seven years 2,000*l.*, second seven years 4,000*l.*, third seven years 6,000*l.*, and that the last contract was for 8,000*l.* during life. It is added that this last contract was held for forty years. This is altogether impossible, as Allen died at the age of seventy-one, and he could not have undertaken the first contract when only ten years of age.

* There is a foolish story that when Wood, the architect, pointed out to Allen the enormous expense of the projected building, Ralph took him into a room and unlocked a huge chest of gold, then into a second, then into a third, &c., in each of which was the same vast hoard. This is altogether incredible. No man knew Allen's means (the materials of the building, which were his own, included) better than Wood. And Ralph was far too good a man of business to lock up his money in boxes and to abandon all the usufruct of it,

friend John Wood), and of local workmen, to build a princely mansion with the maligned materials. I doubt whether there is a finer site in the country than that on which the house is built. Fielding has very accurately described it in one of the earlier chapters of *Tom Jones*. The residence itself is a mighty mansion, with out-houses on a corresponding scale. "A merciful man is merciful to his beast;" and Allen instructed the architect to provide good accommodation for all his live-stock, from his horses down, or rather up, to his pigeons. "Within this superstructure," says Wood, after describing its architectural details, "the pigeons are magnificently housed, and their particular cells are made with wrought freestone; so that if a beautiful habitation is really an allurements to this species of birds, as some pretend, Mr. Allen's pigeons will, in all probability, never desert their present place of abode. The tamer poultry," it is added, "are not less beautifully housed at Widcombe than the pigeons." The house is built on a somewhat higher elevation, but, seen from below, these spacious residences for man and beast appear like one continuous line of buildings.

The main feature of the mansion is a magnificent portico. The architect of Wanstead House having boasted of the hexastyle portico, designed by him for that once-celebrated Essex mansion, Wood determined that Somersetshire should possess a grander one. I knew Wanstead House well in my younger days. I first saw, when a very little boy, the Duke of Wellington on one of its terraces; and when he was pointed out to me as the great soldier, who had won the battle of Waterloo, I was disappointed with his size. My juvenile imagination had pictured him as something not much inferior in stature to the giant I had seen at Fairlop Fair. Wanstead House and Fairlop Fair are both gone now—and half a century has passed since the day of which I write—but as I stood under the portico of Ralph Allen's house, on one of the first fine spring days of the present season, I was strongly reminded of Wanstead House and that first sight of the great Duke—whilst the "years which bring the philosophic mind" set me thinking of the mighty moral differences between the owners of the mansions which bore these structural resemblances to each other. Could two men have been more unlike each other than Ralph Allen and Long Wellesley? I speak only of the names associated in my mind with the two buildings; for the one had closed his career of righteousness long before the other made himself a reproach. I confess that I was surprised to find myself standing beneath the portico of the Priory House. I had been told that the grounds and house were strictly closed against chance visitors. But I made my way, unchallenged, almost unseen, into the grand hall, which runs right through the building, and all the doors of which were wide open, and I walked out into the portico, from which is the view celebrated by Fielding, and no one accosted me, but some stately peacocks, who kept watch and ward on the terraces, as I remember they did to my boyish delight at Wanstead House. I saw neither priest nor student, nor even a workman

(it was Saturday afternoon), and the only signs of life that greeted me during my visit, were a telegraph boy and the dim sounds of an organ.

Undisturbed by any officious cicerone, I saw the place under the happiest conditions (a pleasant companion included), and I did not wonder that such men as Pope and Warburton, having once found their way thither, were slow to go away again.* The former quarrelled with his hospitable friend; the latter married his niece. There have been different stories current about the cause of the rupture between Allen and Pope, but all centre in Martha Blount. A Bath writer says—"Pope, not content with his (Allen's) great attention to himself, wished him to give up the manor-house of Bathampton to Martha Blount, his mistress. Allen was shocked, and positively refused to do so; upon which the poet quitted the house, and spoke disrespectfully of his best friend." Mr. Laurence, in his *Life of Fielding*, says: "Of the differences which existed between Pope and Allen, it is unnecessary here to speak at any length. They seem to have originated entirely in the alleged arrogant behaviour of Mrs. Blount (whom Pope had taken with him to Prior Park), and who requested the use of Allen's chariot to take her to a Roman Catholic chapel, when he was actually Mayor of Bath. Mrs. Allen resented this conduct, and the misunderstanding between the two ladies caused a coolness on the part of Pope to his quondam friend."

Both of these stories were hinted at whilst Pope lived, but he denied them both. They do not seem to be very probable. If Mr. and Mrs. Allen received Martha Blount at Prior Park, they could not have been much scandalised at the thought of her living in a neighbouring house, or of her taking a drive in their carriage.† Was the offence then that Pope's mistress wished to go to a Roman Catholic place of worship in the Allen carriage, when Ralph was "actually" Mayor of Bath? We know that Allen was a good Protestant and a staunch Royalist, but he was a generous-hearted, and, we may presume, a tolerant man, and would hardly have quarrelled with a friend about a seat in a carriage accorded to a guest of an opposite persuasion. In the '45 this might have happened, but Allen was Mayor of Bath in 1742. It has been questioned whether Pope and Martha Blount ever lived in the Priory House at all. The scepticism shows the value of information derived from the "best (local) authorities." Collinson, in his *History of Somersetshire*, says that the house in Prior Park was completed about 1743. Pope died in the following

* Pope had visited Bath long before the erection of Prior Park. There is a letter from him, dated in 1714, in which he says, "I am endeavouring (like all awkward fellows) to become agreeable, by imitation and observing who are most in favor with the fair; I sometimes copy the civil air of Gascoine, sometimes the impudent one of Nash, and sometimes, for vanity, the silly one of a neighbour of yours, who has lost money to the gamesters."

† The manor-house of Bathampton had, I believe, been the residence of Mrs. Allen's (the Holder) family, and came into Allen's possession through his wife. This might, perhaps, have the more embittered Mrs. Allen's feelings, and given her more intelligible ground of complaint.

year, after a long illness, during the progress of which he was reconciled to Allen. The county historian may have had no means of ascertaining correctly when the house was completed, and there is nothing curious in the error. Wood is silent on the subject of the date of completion, but the late Mr. Kelvert has published a memorandum, drawn up by Mr. Jones, master-of-the-works to Wood, in which it is stated that the buildings were commenced in 1735-36, and were seven years in course of construction. This would bring the date to the period fixed by Collinson—1743; the dwelling-house having been erected after the out-houses. But there is extant a letter from Pope to Warburton written from Prior Park, in November, 1741, in which the former says: "You will want no servant here. Your room will be next to mine, and one man will serve us. Here is a library, and a gallery ninety feet long to walk in, and a coach whenever you would take the air with me." It is clear, from this, that Allen had taken up his residence in Prior Park before the end of 1741. Before his removal to the country, Allen had resided in Lilliput Alley—in a house which Wood had greatly enlarged and improved, from designs made by him in London in 1727. Allen purchased the ground which had been the old bowling-green, and laid it out in a garden, the site of which is traced on all the old maps.

The cause of the temporary interruption of friendship lies apart from this consideration of residence. There was a coolness between the hosts and the guests—very natural in such circumstances. The poet always declared that *he* was the cause of it, and he generously defended his mistress from the imputations cast upon her at the time. It was said that her conduct was arrogant and offensive. This may not have been true, and the probability is that when the poet contended that, whatever grounds of complaint the Allens may have had, he was the offender, he meant to signify only that he had been blamed for taking Martha Blount to the Allens' house at all. In his subsequent letters to his mistress he veiled this meaning and took all upon himself, with a delicacy of feeling and kindliness of heart, which bespoke the gentleness of his nature. Much softened by sickness, he was careful not to give pain to another. Every one, I think, must accept this version of the story, for the simple reason that it could not well have happened otherwise. It is true that if Mrs. Allen had known the real position and true character of Martha Blount before inviting her, or suffering her to be invited, to her house, she had no subsequent grounds of complaint, even if the visitor's manners "had not the repose which mark the cast of Vere de Vere." But, perhaps, the true light dawned upon her at a later period, and that Pope was reproached, and reproached himself, for not making all things clear from the first. If Allen himself were concerned in this deception or reservation, he cannot be accounted blameless; but many things, that were well known about Twickenham, were not known about Bath, and he was not one to concern himself much about metropolitan scandals.*

* It is right, however, to give Martha Blount's own statement—"They (the

It was through Pope that Ralph Allen became acquainted with Warburton. There is a story about this first meeting of the three friends, which has at least an air of truth. It is narrated that whilst at Prior Park Pope received a letter from Warburton, whom he had not before met, offering to visit the post at Twickenham. The parson had defended Pope's *Essay on Man*, and had thus merited his gratitude. "Warburton's letter," so runs the anecdote, "is handed to him (Pope) at dinner; he lays it on the table perplexed. 'What is the matter?' says Allen. 'Oh!' replies he, 'a Lincolnshire parson, to whom I am much obliged, promises me a visit.' 'If that be all, let him come here:' and this was Warburton's introduction to his future home." No one can question the probability of this story.* What Allen is reported to have said, is just what he would have said. But Pope and Warburton did not meet for the first time in Prior Park. Their first interview was at Twickenham; and if this ever happened, it must have been after the poet and the critic had become acquainted with each other. Certain, however, it is, that Warburton went to Prior Park—and to some purpose. He married Allen's niece; or, as it was said by Horace Walpole and others, his natural daughter; and became possessed of the domain after the death of the Squire and his wife.† Mrs. Warburton outlived her husband and married again. Her second husband outlived her; and Prior Park became the property of another parson, the Rev. Martin Stafford Smith, B.D.

Squire Allen was a man of catholic tastes, and among those who assembled at his hospitable board was Quin, the actor, who for many years was, perhaps, as well known at Bath as Beau Nash himself. It was said that he wished to supplant Nash as Master of the Ceremonies, and a letter is published by Goldsmith upon the subject, the genuineness of which the biographer rather questions than denies.‡ There can not be any doubt it was a forgery. Quin was not a highly educated man, but he was perfectly incapable of writing such a letter as that attributed to him. But he said many bitter things in his time (often as clever as they were bitter), and it is probable that he made many enemies, who endeavoured to bring him to shame. He conceived a great dislike of Warburton. It is related, that on

Allens) had often invited me to their house; and as I went to Bristol with Lady Gerard for some time, whilst Mr. Pope was with them, I took that opportunity of the visit I had desired. They used Mr. Pope very rudely, and Mr. Warburton with double complaisance, to make their ill-usage of the other more marked; me they used very oddly, in a stiff and over-civil manner." I have often thought that it was Warburton himself who put certain notions into the heads of the Allens.

* Except, perhaps, in respect of Pope's designation of Warburton as "a Lincolnshire parson." For Warburton had made himself a great name before the house in Prior Park was habitable. He was anything but an obscure country parson.

† Allen died in 1764, and Mrs. Allen in 1766.

‡ Goldsmith was censured for not having spoken out more plainly with respect to the fabrication of the letter beginning, "My der Lord—Old beanx Knash has mead himself so dessagreeable," &c. &c. Apart from the question of orthography, there is the fact that Quin, having at that time (1760) plenty of money and not a leg to stand on, was not very likely to have coveted the post of Master of the Ceremonies.

one occasion, at Prior Park, Warburton asked Quin, in presence of a large assembly of people, to give him a taste of his quality as an actor. Upon which he stood up and delivered some speeches from *Venice Preserved*, in one of which were the following lines :—

Honest men

Are the soft easy cushions on which knaves
Repose and fatten.

The application of this would, not improbably, have been discerned, even if Quin had not glanced at Allen when he uttered the words, "honest men," and at Warburton when he emphasised "knaves." Allen, doubtless, had his weaknesses; and, perhaps, he had conceived the grand aspirations of Sir Epicure Mammon—

I will have grave divines to flatter me,
Poets I will not heed.

During the latter years of his life, Quin resided at Bath, and died there in 1766—five years after Nash, and two years after Allen was buried. Smollett must have known him well, for there are many references to him in the Bath letters of the Matthew Bramble correspondence. The letters signed T. Melfort, which more than all others may be presumed to contain the opinions of the novelist, present a most flattering word-picture of the old actor. "How far," writes the young gentleman, "he (Quin) may relax in his hours of jollity, I can not pretend to say; but his general conversation is conducted by the nicest rules of propriety, and Mr. James Quin is certainly one of the best-bred men in the kingdom. He is not only a most agreeable companion, but a very honest man, highly susceptible of friendship, warm, steady, and even generous in his attachments; disdaining flattery, and incapable of meanness and dissimulation." Young Melfort had an ambition to dine with him at the "Three Tuns," and his wish was gratified. He saw the old bon-vivant carried out with "six good bottles of claret under his belt." His excessive fondness for John Dory—a fish less in favour now than it used to be—is well known. Dr. Doran has given us some anecdotes illustrative of it.* There is a story in *Humphry Clinker*, which may be an invention of the novelist, or merely an application of a current anecdote. Matthew Bramble asks the actor to dinner, and provides the inevitable John. Tabitha Bramble, who insists on calling him "Gwynne," being rebuked by her brother, defends herself by saying she thought he was descended from a famous lady of the same profession. What Quin's first comment was need not be told; but he added that he often thought he must be of royal extraction, as he was very arbitrary and imperious. "If I was an absolute prince at this instant," he said, "I believe I should send for the head of your cook in a charger. She has committed felony on the person of John Dory, which is mangled in a cruel manner, and even presented without sauce."

There was another frequent attendant at Allen's house in the days

* *Their Majesties' Servants*, one of the most amusing books in my library.

of Pope and Warburton—this was Parson Graves, the incumbent of Claverton, which living he held for some fifty years. It is altogether a charming place. No one could have wished to drowse away half-a-century in the cure of a more delightful parish. Graves was not merely a country parson. In that capacity he made no great figure, except as a worthy, kind-hearted, charitable man. He was, perhaps, one of the worst preachers ever known; but he was an excellent schoolmaster, and he made some small reputation as the author of the *Spiritual Quixote*, and some other works. It was written of him, "He is of so amiable a disposition, that stuttering and speaking thick, which nature made his blemish, will be imitated by little poetasters, who can no otherwise arrive at his humour, and yet would be like him." This might have been written nearly a century afterwards of Charles Lamb.

[A history of misprints and clerical errors would be a very entertaining book, though, perhaps, it would be impossible to adduce, with perfect fidelity, all the illustrative cases within the knowledge of any one man. I think that I have read somewhere of an unfortunate author, who was so wrought upon by misfortunes of this kind that he cut his throat in despair. I am "made of sterner stuff" myself, but I certainly was distressed by some errors of dates in my last paper, especially that in which I informed the public that Queen Anne visited Bath in 1804. But it has been said that it is great consolation to have "brothers in adversity;" and I have been consoled by having just seen it stated in Chalmers's *Biographical Dictionary*, that Queen Mary (the first) married Prince Philip of Spain in 1754—a corruption of English history twice as serious as my own. There is an inveterate tendency to write the century-figure which you are most accustomed to use. I wonder how long it will be before our sons and grandsons, after the close of the present century, will habituate themselves to the substitution of the *nine* for the *eight*? Since writing this, I have found in the index to the *Autobiography of Madame Piozzi*, edited by Mr. Hayward, "Caroline, Queen, at Bath, vol. ii. pp. 221—her death, 237—her trial, 317—" Our Queens seem to have fared very badly at the hands of the biographers. It was Queen Charlotte, not Queen Caroline, who went to Bath at the period referred to; and, if Queen Caroline had been the person intended, she could not have been tried, in this world at least, after she was dead.]

The French Press.

I. FIRST PERIOD.

THE FRENCH PRESS, FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO THE DEATH OF MAZARIN.

I.

The first Frenchman to found a printed newspaper was Dr. Théophraste Renaudot, who obtained the King's privilege for the *Gazette de France* in 1631. The idea was not a new one, for the *Weekly News* existed already in England; and so far back as the year 1568, the bankers Fugger of Augsburg had instituted a commercial news-sheet called *Ordinari-Zeittungen*, which, though manuscript until the year 1600, enjoyed a very extensive circulation and differed but little from the mercantile journals established since. The Venetians, however, are said to have preceded the Germans, and the derivation of the word *gazette* is ascribed to the small coin paid by the public for copies of a news-bulletin first issued by the Council of Ten during the wars of Venice against the Turks. Others prefer tracing *gazette* to *gazzia*, Italian for the garrulous magpie; and a few, with that taste for riddles which is happily imperishable, deduce the word from the Hebrew *izgard*, or messenger, thereby implying that gazettes were in some shape known to the Children of Israel at a date prior to the *Acta Diurna* of the Romans, the *Ephemeridæ* of the Athenians, and those *Daily Chronicles* of the Babylonians, by the help of which Berosius is said to have written his *History of Chaldaa*.

The French have always been very fond of news. Cæsar mentions in his *Commentaries* that the Gauls ran after strangers and mobbed them to ask whether they had any intelligence to communicate; and this practice became in time such a nuisance, by reason of the false rumours which obtained credence, that among the well-ordered tribes a law was made enjoining that strangers should first be taken before the authorities, who would decide in their wisdom what items of their information had best be kept secret.

In the Middle Ages, news were disseminated by chroniclers and troubadours; and it would be a mistake, therefore, to attribute the popularity of the latter to their mere vocal or musical proficiency. A troubadour was as welcome in hall or village as the special edition of a modern newspaper. He came from afar, had endless things to tell, and only began his singing when he had spun his yarns in prose. The

troubadour's songs bore a likeness to the music-hall minstrelsies of our own time, being jingling rhymes on the current topics of the day, rounded off with witticisms more or less smart, according to the skill of the singer; but the troubadour exercised many of the functions of the nineteenth-century leader-writer, for he incited men to battle, and was responsible for a good many of those rebellions against excessive taxation which could never have spread so rapidly as they did had there not been men to carry from town to town in glowing language the reports of successful risings. Edward I. of England waged a pitiless war on the Welsh bards, for these men were dangerous in the same way as the National press in Ireland is dangerous now, and as the French Alsatian press is dangerous to Prince Bismarck. So again, when after the agitations for municipal franchises in Philip Augustus's time, and after the *jacqueries* in the reign of Charles V., many wandering minstrels were hanged, it was not by any means for the same reasons which conduce to the modern prosecutions of organ-grinders. As to the chronicles of the Middle Ages, these assumed towards the fifteenth century more and more the character of periodical intelligencers. They were not records which men compiled during a lifetime for posthumous publication; but summaries of contemporary events, drawn up by indefatigable writers, chiefly monks or clerks in the households of noblemen, and published four or five times a year, sometimes oftener. Such of these chronicles as are extant offer interesting mines of research to the historian. They are very minute in their narratives, and would be well worth the reading of certain enthusiasts who imagine that every age previous to this one was steeped in barbarism up to the ears. We learn from them that there was plenty of homely liberty and of good justice, too, for those who kept clear of conspiracies, irreligion, or theft. Men went to church more than is the present fashion, dressed as the sumptuary laws required—that is, according to their means and station, without all trying to ape their betters—and were deterred by the fear of whipping from that sort of business competition which takes shape in false weights and measures. But in other respects, they had as great a fancy as their descendants for gathering in the market-places to air their grievances, and if a traveller brought them news of war, court-jousts, distant plagues, or new books, an epitome of the same was quickly engrossed on a sheet of paper, of which copies found a brisk sale for something like a halfpenny of our present money.

Life being very local during the feudal era, almost every town had its chroniclers, and these jumbled big events and little together in a way that was occasionally odd; but the chroniclers of Paris, writing in a city that was the centre of the whole world's news, exercised discrimination in their editing, and as a rule recorded only facts that were worth the mention. Thus in the rhyming chronicles, begun by George Chastelain and continued by Jehan Molinet over a space of seventy years—1428–1498—events of general importance only were inserted; and in the versical summary which concludes these chronicles, and gives the pith of them, we

find the invention of printing and the discovery of America thus alluded to :—

J'ai vu grant multitude
De livres imprimés
Pour tirer en estude
Povres mal argentez ;
Par ces nouvelles modes
Aura maint escolier
Decrets, Bibles et Codes,
Sans grant argent bailler.

J'ai vu deux ou trois isles
Trouvées en mon temps,
De chucades fertiles,
Et dont les habitants
Sont d'estranges manières,
Sauvages et velus.
D'or et d'argent minières
Voit on en ces pallus.*

Gutenberg's invention did not for a long while suggest the notion of printed newspapers, but the religious wars which raged throughout the sixteenth century effected a great move in that direction by the inauguration of printed manifestoes, accounts of battles and tales of martyrdoms which the Protestants of Germany and England circulated among the Huguenots of France, and vice versa, to fire each other's zeal. Not a Reformer crossed the frontier of a state where the religious strife was in progress without bringing, concealed in his saddle-bags or in the lining of his doublet, some printed scrap to tell how it fared with the good cause in the country he was leaving, and some of these scraps, notably those which were despatched from France after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, are veritable newspapers. They were written in Latin, the universal tongue then, and contained a graphic and most sensational résumé of all the cruel things that had been done—the murder of Coligny, the butchering of women and children by torchlight, the bloody mass of thanksgiving attended by Henri de Guise and his red-handed accomplices in the Church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois on the morning of the 26th of August, 1572, after the massacre was over, and even that disputed fact (though, by the way, everything is now disputed), of Charles IX. having himself fired on his Protestant subjects from a window at the Louvre. The King, who seems to have learned that reports of his high deeds were being printed, launched a fulminating edict against all and any who should be found with copies of the seditious sheets in their possession ; and on the 2nd September, one Nicolas Beschelle, a barber, was hanged on the Place de Grève for being discovered in the vain act of trying to decipher one of these luckless Latin prints, which he had just picked up in the roadway. But the religious wars laid the foundations of modern journalism in other manners than by printed handbills. The necessities of warfare led to the improvement of roads everywhere, and to the making of new ones ; the communications between the capital and the provinces became more frequent ; the post established by Louis IX.

* "I have seen" a great multitude of printed books, to beguile into study the poor with little money. Thanks to these new fashions many a scholar will obtain Decrets, Bibles and Codes without having much to pay. I have seen two or three islands discovered in my time, fertile in mysteries, and whose inhabitants are in a singular manner wild and hairy. Mines of gold and silver are to be seen in those swamps."

acquired such a developement; that on the pacification of the kingdom by Henri IV. the mail began to leave Paris once every day, instead of three times a week as in Francis II.'s time, and all these improvements gave birth to a body of individuals who are the fathers of now-a-day chroniqueurs, feuilletonistes and reporters, and who constituted a very popular corporation under the name of *Nouvellistes* or *Newsmen*.

Newsmen had flourished in ancient Rome, and Livy, Seneca, Tacitus, and most other grave writers speak of them with disfavour. They were of two sorts—the *Subrostrani* and the *Parasites*: the former open-air newsmen who clustered near the *rostrum* in the Forum; the latter babbling toadies, who waited upon great people in the morning with a budget of chit-chat and tattle. Seneca says of the *Subrostrani*, that they were “shameless ferreters of anecdotes of a scandalous sort—echoes of all that is disreputable;” and Livy, that, “although these chatterboxes have never set foot beyond the Forum they know better than any general how an army should be commanded and a town besieged. They are great winners of lost or unfought battles.” The *Parasite* is handled in a similar style by Martial:—“The fellow invents news which he relates as true. He knows what the King of the Parthians has resolved in his privy council; he can tell you to a man how many soldiers there are in the Rhine army and in that of the Sarmatians. He is in a position to communicate the substance of what the King of the Dacians has confided to his generals in secret despatches; all the hidden things of politics are familiar to him, and he is always primed with special information. Moreover, he is cognizant of everything that takes place in town, and especially things of a scandalous nature, and he will be the first to tell you that a certain widow,” &c.—Writing 1700 years later, La Bruyère and Montesquieu give exactly the same complimentary account of the Parisian newsmen as we have here of the Roman, though by the time when Montesquieu wrote, the newsmen had well-nigh disappeared under the influx of gazetteers and journalists. At the period when the newsmen of Paris were in their full flood-tide, that is, during the first half of the seventeenth century, they had five meeting-places: the Gardens of the Tuileries, those of the Palais Royal, the Great Hall at the Palais de Justice, and the Cloisters of the Augustine and Celestine Convents. By-and-by a quarrel arose between the frequenters of these rival spots as to which of them furnished the best news, and the matter gave rise to a kind of joint-stock arrangement, by which the Tuileries became, from three to five every afternoon, the head-quarters of all news collected at other places during the morning. The newsmen began their rounds at the Palace of Justice, then went to the Place de Grève, where criminals were flogged or executed at midday, and afterwards strode off in a body for the Palais Royal, in the gardens of which most stock-exchange operations were effected. Towards three, a veteran newsman, who acted as master of the ceremonies, came, and made a selection of the most decently dressed among the Palais Royal set (for the sentries at the Tuileries admitted none but well-dressed people), and

with these in tow, set off for the terrace skirting the present river-side quay. Here a regular bubble and *canard* mart was held.

Those who wish to form any conception of it can find a pale reflex in the Bourse of our own time on a panic-day, in the Petite Bourse held every evening by Parisian stock-jobbers in the Passage de l'Opéra. But what are these squib exchanges, even at the most excited moments, compared to the Tuileries at the date when there were no public prints to take off the keen edge of the popular craving for news? Imagine several hundreds of Frenchmen, in wigs and knee-breeches, pressing towards a particular spot, as if their lives depended upon it. Women are there, and great ladies, with escorts of perfumed smirkers; King Charles' dogs, too, held in leash by silk ribbons, and yelping as their devoted tails and paws are trodden on by the headlong rush. Rings are formed everywhere, and men with their froggish faces aglow, in officious vanity, are declaiming falsehoods as loud and fast as they can remember them—gesticulations, mimicry, and maybe a tear or two now and then, being called in aid to lend a dramatic emphasis where needed. Wonders are heaped on wonders, fables on fables, and the listeners raise their hands aloft, or shout, or stare aghast, or titter in unison with delighted relish if the narrator be wag enough (and trust a Frenchman on that score) to interlard his horrors with some neat bit of libel concerning any *grande dame* well known. The news-bawlers are of all sorts, sizes, and degrees. One had come straight from the war with his arm in a sling, another had received a long letter—for all letters were long then—from a correspondent in Spain, Turkey, or Scotland; a third saw Cinq Mars and De Thou beheaded with his own eyes; a fourth has got a fat Englishman by his side, who arrived in Paris that morning, and whom he has pumped dry ever since for the public behoof; a fifth can tell all about the new Papal nuncio, who entered Versailles, with true Christian humility, drawn by eight horses, and preceded by a hundred menials in livery, and so on. Meanwhile from group to group, with ink-horns at their button-holes, quills behind their ears, and note-books in hand, dart the salaried newsmen of great nobles, jotting entries on flying leaves; and ever and anon, breathless, perspiring and racing one another, hurry up the red, blue, or yellow varlets of these nobles, who snatch the leaves as they are ready, and pelt back home to their masters—neither more nor less than if they were carrying modern telegrams. Some of the newsmen have larger and more eager audiences than others—old hands these, who can lie with the coolest assurance; they are known like crack bookmakers in the betting-rings, or like the acutest among bulls and bears in the jobbing markets. Philosophers may despise such, but philosophers are not common; and to the average Parisian, who can spare an hour every day—as which of them cannot?—this diurnal orgie of false reports is as dram-drinking in Olympus, something sweeter far and more intoxicating than the sip of absinthe and the perusal of *Charivari* which regale the bourgeois mind in this present century of grace. So the crowds increase, and the *petits-*

maitres strut about in their red-heeled shoes, endeavouring to look as if they knew more than all the newsmen put together; and bullies, with vinous voices, though no longer aggressive since Cardinal Richelieu has beheaded the Marquis of Beuvron and Count de Boutteville-Montmorency for duelling, bray huskily that they have State secrets to sell for two farthings; and here and there a determined housewife elbows her way through the press, on the look out for her frivolous lord, who is wasting his time here instead of being behind his counter,* and presently the lord in question may be seen waddling back to his merchandise, in uxorial custody, looking penitent enough. And as the minutes flit by the fates of empires and kings are decided for the greater glory of the French nation: Gustavus Adolphus defeats the imperialists, the Protestants of La Rochelle eat one another's boots and capitulate, Louis the Just is going to divorce his wife because of the Duke of Buckingham, the poisoning Marchioness of Brinvilliers swallowed a dozen buckets of water before confessing; and his Eminence of Richelieu is a great man—may God promote him to heaven as soon as convenient! All this until the hour of closing arrives, when the Swiss Guard clear the gardens to the rattle of their kettle-drums, and the population of *badaud* Frenchmen disperse to their homes, praying there may be things newer still for to-morrow. But when the labours of the Tuileries are over, all is not finished yet for the leading newsmongers. Back in their lodgings, or seated in one of the coffee-houses of the Rue St. Antoine, they dictate to a staff of tattered

* The rage of certain shopkeepers for hearing news is frequently alluded to in the comedies of the day, and one of these introducing an indignant wife among the newsmen of the Tuileries makes her exclaim:

“Messieurs, je vous demande excuse,
 Mais je croyais avec vous
 Trouver mon fainéant d'époux,
 Qui tous les jours ici s'amuse,
 Et fait le nouvelliste au milieu de cent fous.
 Quand chez un procureur il va pour ses affaires,
 Il oublie en causant ce qui l'y fait aller,
 Pourvu qu'il nouvellise, il n'y songe plus guère,
 Et s'en revient sans en parler.
 Dernièrement tout prêt à rendre l'âme,
 Il pensa me faire enrager,
 Et d'un air tout mourant il me disait, 'Ma femme,
 N'as-tu rien de nouveau? Si tu veux m'obliger,
 Va t'en chercher, je te conjure,
 Quelque nouvelle qui soit sûre.'

A son apothécaire il en disait autant,
 A son médecin tout de même:
 Ils avaient beau le voir avec un soin extrême:
 Sans nouvelles jamais il n'en était content;
 S'ils n'en apportaient pas, il leur faisait la mine,
 Et nous étions obligés quelquefois
 D'en inventer entre nous trois
 Pour l'engager à prendre médecine.

scribes the news-letters they are paid to send regularly to courtiers at St. Germain and Versailles, or to provincial nobles. And arduous compositions some of these letters are for the newsman, who has his reputation to maintain and many hungry and unscrupulous competitors to outdo. So he takes care not to be dry. He flavours his facts with epigrams, his anecdotes with puns, and his politics with satire, which might cost him those useful ears of his if he bruited it aloud in the highways. On the whole, he produces a diverting letter, which must have been a boon indeed to the recipient; and which even the explorer of to-day, when he discovers it among the dusty piles of the library at the Arsenal, that of St. Geneviève, or the National Library in the Rue de Richelieu, may read with profit and not without admiration.

II.

THINGS were in this state when the Dr. Théophraste Renaudot above mentioned came to Paris. He was a shrewd man, born at Loudun in 1567, brought up in Paris, but graduate of the Faculty of Montpellier. In 1612, being then twenty-six, he returned to the capital, and somehow got appointed at once doctor to the King. But there was no salary attached to this post, which was in his case purely honorary, and so Renaudot opened a school, though the fact that he, a mere provincial doctor, had obtained a medical appointment at court, was very sore to the Paris Faculty of Medicine, who began to annoy him from that moment. Renaudot, however, was a man far ahead of his contemporaries in sagacity, patience, learning and humanity. Petty spite did not disturb him, or at least it did not deter him from executing any of the numerous plans he had in mind for the welfare of his contemporaries. He first inaugurated a free dispensary; and, being no friend to the bleeding and drugging processes then in violent vogue, he treated his patients with simple remedies, which were in direct contravention to those usually prescribed, but which oddly enough often cured them. This of course raised a grievous outcry. That a man should venture to invent new physic was bad enough, but that he should have the face to cure any one by its means was not to be stood for a moment. Guy Patin, the most celebrated physician; Duval, who had not his equal for cutting off a leg, especially when amputation was unnecessary, and the entire School of Medicine, fell on him tooth and nail. He had been impudent enough to assert that a roasted mouse was not a sovereign cure for gunshot wounds, that cobwebs boiled in camomile were silly things for an indigestion, and that nobody had yet been cured of the jaundice by swallowing the yoke of an egg with fleas in it. The School solemnly banned these heresies, and Renaudot received notice to close his dispensary under pain of being prosecuted for practising as a doctor in Paris without being duly qualified by a degree from the Parisian University. But Richelieu, who knew a clever man when he saw one, sent for Duval, and told him significantly that he

should like to see him make it up with Renaudot. At the same time he appointed the latter Commissioner General for the sick and sound poor of the kingdom; authorised him to open a hospital in the St. Antoine quarter (each patient was to have a bed to himself in this hospital—a novel luxury), and was gracious enough to take an interest in some chemical discoveries which Renaudot had made, and which supplied new curatives to the *Materia Medica*. Emboldened by this patronage, Renaudot now added to the tale of his sins by annexing a pawn-office to his dispensary. A third of their value was to be advanced on pledges, and the interest charged was no more than 8 per cent. per annum. A clause specified, however, that the pledge was to be forfeited if not redeemed at the proper time; but Renaudot never availed himself of this privilege; and, to the great scandal of all Lombards, Jews and others, who had never lent for less than 25 per cent. and had always forfeited without mercy, this new establishment prospered in such wise as utterly to supplant its rivals. Need it be said that the Lombards and Jews unanimously protested in the name of the down-trodden poor against such usurious practices as the above, and that Guy Patin made a new and most desperate attempt to get Renaudot struck off the roll of practitioners as a mountebank. But once again Richelieu shielded the man with his strong arm, and Renaudot quietly struck out in a new philanthropic direction, by instituting his famous *Bureaux d'Adresses et de Rencontre*. These were what we should call a *General Estate and Agency Office*; with an "Exchange and Mart" superadded; they met a want which must have been sadly felt before, and if they were Renaudot's only creation, they would still entitle him to rank very high as a benefactor of his species.

By paying three halfpence, equivalent to about fivepence of our money, anybody could go and register his wants, or be put into communication with other advertisers able to supply him with what he needed. People who sought to sell, let, purchase, or hire estates, houses, or lodgings; masters who were seeking servants, tutors, clerks, mechanics, and domestics desiring situations; tradesmen or private persons in search of loans; inquirers wanting information on matters legal, administrative, medical, historical, or geographical; owners of property who were anxious to effect exchanges or sales—all these found assistance at the *Bureaux d'Adresses*. But this was only the primitive form of the institution. By-and-by show-rooms were erected, where people could deposit property for exchange or sale, without letting their names be known. Renaudot drew up a code of regulations, which we would gladly quote but for its length; and in this he not only laid down rules most considerate and intelligent, but furnished his reasons for them. Amongst other things he said: "People may well be excused for not desiring everybody to know that they wish to sell or exchange their goods. Let these confide their names in private to us: we will ticket their property with a reference number, and the transaction can be effected without publicity." Again: "Certain persons in search of a lawyer or doctor cannot of themselves know, or at most know only

by doubtful rumour, what lawyers or what doctors are best able to plead their special causes or to treat the particular maladies with which they are afflicted. To all such we will make it our business truthfully to say, 'This lawyer is renowned for his knowledge of land laws; this one is better suited for commercial cases; this third can eloquently defend a prisoner unjustly accused of treason.' And as regards doctors, 'This one has been more successful than any other in treating small-pox; that other is much distinguished for his cure of wounds,' &c. And Renaudot was as good as his word, for in this section of his Bureaux, which might so easily have degenerated into a puff advertisement concern, he classed friends and foes alike, according to the position which public opinion assigned them. There is a double entry in Renaudot's professional register, which is eloquent and almost touching, considering how cruelly the two men it names had persecuted him. "*Surgical operations.*—I know of no better surgeon than M. Duval, who lives in the Rue de la Ferronnerie. His skill is very great; and always bestowed with courtesy." "*Diseases of the eye, ulcers, eruptions on the skin.*—M. Guy Patin, physician to his Majesty, should be consulted by all persons afflicted as above. He is without a rival in these branches of the art."

Elsewhere in his Code of Rules Renaudot says: "Men intending to travel are often unacquainted as to the shortest and easiest routes they should take; moreover, they know nothing of the towns through which they must pass; and again, many of them would like to make sure of a place where their letters could be sent during their absence and forwarded to them with punctuality. I will accordingly furnish all intending travellers with an itinerary telling them what roads are the safest and what hostleries in the provinces offer the best accommodation to man and beast. I will also receive letters and parcels in deposit for all, not travellers only, whose convenience might be suited thereby; and I will forward, on payment of the required sum in my office, an order for an equivalent sum on any correspondent I may have—and my correspondents are numerous—in provincial cities." Elsewhere again Renaudot undertakes to draw up petitions or to write letters for the illiterate, to transmit parcels to any part of Paris, Versailles, or St. Germain, to advertise objects lost or stolen, and to keep a register wherein people could write messages for persons whose addresses they ignored or with whom for some other reason they were unable to correspond directly. So that this extraordinary man not only inaugurated in France an Estate, Professional and Servants' Agency, as well as an office for private sales and exchanges, but further laid the basis of the Poste Restante, Parcels Delivery, Post-Office Directory, Tourist's Guide and Money Order Office; besides affording an outlet to troubled spirits like those who correspond through the agony column of *The Times*. It is not surprising that his office in the Rue de la Calandre should soon have been all too small for its multifarious duties and that his original staff of six clerks should, in less than three months, have swelled to fifty. Richelieu, in sheer admiration at the man, sent for him

and thanked him for the services he was rendering the King's subjects. He also offered him money to extend his offices, and this Renaudot accepted, but only as a loan. It was his custom to levy a commission of six deniers* per livre (franc) on the sales he effected, and by means of these and other receipts he soon repaid the Cardinal every penny that had been advanced to him. But he did more than this. Finding that his registers were not always convenient modes of reference, by reason of the excessive crowds which pressed round them, he brought out a printed advertiser, which is almost the exact prototype of a journal at present well known in London. It was called *Feuille du Bureau d'Adresses*, and appeared every Saturday, at the price of 1 sou.

Opinions differ as to whether this paper preceded the *Gazette de France*, or was issued simultaneously with it. Probably it was first published in manuscript form, but came out in print at least six months before the *Gazette*, for a number bearing the date of June 14th, 1631, shows a periodical in full organisation and containing indirect references to advertisements which must have appeared several weeks before. At all events this *Feuille* was purely an advertisement sheet—a forerunner of the *Petites Affiches* which were reinvented in 1746—it was in no sense a newspaper. Here are a few extracts which will mark its character.—

22. Wanted to sell or exchange a new coat of scarlet cloth (royal seal quality), lined with satin of the same colour and embroidered with silver lace. Price eight crowns; or the value would be taken in colonial produce.

27. A pair of earrings for sale or exchange. Two pearls, pear-shaped, and very white. Price 100 livres; or exchanges in lace for ladies' collar and sleeves.

37. A fragment of the true holy cross, encased under a diamond, which forms the centre of a cross lately belonging to the deceased Cardinal Archbishop of Rouen. It will protect its wearer in battle, and save from all dangers by sea. Price 250 crowns; or its owner would pledge it a year for 200 crowns, at 10 per cent. interest. Glory be to God!

40. A soldier who has lost a leg and an eye in the King's service, thanks be to Heaven! will sell or exchange his sword, which is of no more use to him, but which came from his father and his grandsire before that, and is beautified by a silver hilt richly carved and firm to hold. It has never been drawn but in the cause of the true faith, and has spilled the blood of heretics more than could be numbered. It would leap out of the scabbard unbidden at the sight of a Huguenot, nor less obedient to the empire of love, would it ever fail a brave knight who unsheathed it to guard his mistress. It would be the fitting companion of a clear heart and loyal hand; and the price of it is 28 crowns. Or, in exchange, would be taken any article suitable to an aged warrior with more honour than means, though no blame is intended on our King, who recompenses all his servants with generosity above their deserts.

Then, under the heading of *Affaires Mêlées*, we find:—

103. A young dromedary for sale at a reasonable price.

107. An atlas by Henricus Hondius. Price 48 livres.

109. A man will give an invention for stopping game and preventing it from leaving a wood, or once it has gone out, from re-entering therein otherwise than at the spot one desires.

* The currency of that time was as follows: 15 deniers = 1 sol or sou; 20 sols = 1 livre tournois (franc); 3 livres = 1 écu (crown); 20 livres = 1 louis-d'or.

115. A companion wanted to travel to Italy with.*

124. Lodgings to let in full view of the spot where evil-doers are most justly executed.

Then we come to advertisements of *The Times* order :—

If the gentleman with the blue feather, who saved two ladies wearing masks in the Rue St. Denis from the insolences of a drunkard, is as tender-hearted as he is brave, he will find one of his obliged servants ready to thank him without her mask at the gate of the Place Royale to-morrow at 4 in the afternoon.

From L. to H. Once only, but never again.

I thank God, but next Him the man who brained the mad dog at my shop-door last Monday, and went away without listening to my gratitude. Modesty is the diadem of courage, but my wife and children would have been glad to embrace the friend who shielded us from a great peril, which makes us still shudder.

Stolen, with unequalled effrontery, from an honest man who was returning home at night near the Church of St. Paul, a new cloak of gray cloth, a hat with a silver buckle, and a belt with a purse attached to it. The cloak and the hat were marked inside with the letters P. Y., and obedient subjects of the King are cautioned against buying them.

The advertisements numbered many hundreds, and were very neatly classed, the size of the paper being ordinary folio, with three columns to a page. It is clear that from the moment he started his *Feuille du Bureau d'Adresses*, Renaudot must have conceived the possibility of founding a news-sheet; but, even if he had never published his advertisements, this idea must still have occurred to him. In the first place, his agency business brought an immense amount of varied intelligence to his knowledge; in the next place, he was the intimate friend of the genealogist, d'Hozier, who wrote him from abroad most long and chatty letters, which he would read to his patients lying sick in bed, much to their improvement; and, in the third place, the manuscript *News Letters* had attained, by the year 1630, to such a pitch of perfection, and found such a ready sale, that the notion of further popularising them by printing must have suggested itself to more than one man before it was actually put into practice. But the great bar was this, that nothing could be printed without the King's privilege, and this privilege was not lightly granted. Edicts of a most sanguinary nature had been launched against clandestinely printed pamphlets in 1553, 1560, 1561, 1563, and 1570. From the year 1600 to 1610, these edicts had been renewed twice and three times every year, though, whilst Henri IV. reigned, delinquents were not hanged, but only fined for their first offence, and whipped for the second and following. But Louis XIII. set to whipping, imprisoning, and banishing erring printers as soon as he came of age; and in 1620

* Advertisements of this order were very numerous, for persons seldom set out for a long journey singly; but wrote until they could hear of a number more with whom they could make up a party strong enough to defend itself against highway-men. It was not the least of Renaudot's services that he inquired into the respectability of companions who offered themselves, in order that an honest man might no more be exposed to travel with a rogue, who, once clear of Paris, would relieve him of his purse and luggage.

he even tried to interfere with the written *News Letters*; "which," says the royal edict, "have become a grievous nuisance by reason of the falsehoods and scandals they contain, and must henceforth be written with truth and propriety or not at all; failing which, their authors must dread our displeasure." This of course did not suit the newsmen; and they easily foresaw that, if obliged to submit their amusing productions in a printed shape to official censorship, these elucubrations would be shorn of half their attractions. Accordingly, they avoided printing; and manuscript letters continued in vogue for several years after Renaudot launched his *Gazette*. This, by-the-by, was the case in England as well as in France. Here the laws about printing were as severe as there, and the *Evening Post*, published during the early years of Charles I.'s reign, expresses its astonishment that country gentlemen should pay 3*l.* and 4*l.* a year to have a *News Letter* sent them, when they could subscribe to the printed journal for 2*d.* a copy. In time, however, the *Post* found that it was no use trying to outvie the *News Letters* in interest, and so hit upon the sagacious expedient of leaving two of its pages blank, in order that those newsmen might fill them up by hand, and so afford country subscribers the double advantage of licensed news in print, and unlicensed tittle-tattle in writing.

Renaudot, who had no wish to publish tattle, had no reason to fear censorship. He addressed himself to Richelieu, and craved leave to start a printed newspaper under royal patronage. The politic Cardinal was quite shrewd enough to see how useful might be to him an organ which would set information before the public in the manner he desired, and in that manner alone; so he granted all Renaudot wished, in the form of "letters patent," securing him an entire monopoly of printing newspapers, and moreover he conferred on his *protégé* the pompous title of Historiographer of France. The first number of the *Gazette de France* appeared on Friday, May 30, 1631.

III.

Its size was four quarto pages, and its price one sol parisien, i.e. $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.*, worth about $1\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* modern money. The publication of the paper had been heralded by a prospectus, very long, minute, and shrewd as usual, but of which no copy remains. All we know for certain is, that curiosity was much excited, and that 500 impressions of the first number were struck and sold in one day—no mean achievement considering the tediousness of printing by the old wooden hand-presses. The first number contained no preface or address, nothing in the way of a leading article, but plunged at once in *medias res*, and gave news from nineteen foreign towns or countries, but, oddly enough, not a line of French intelligence. This is the order in which the items were classed, and their dates. From Constantinople, April 2nd, 1631; Rome, April 26th (and under this heading came the news from Spain and Portugal); North Germany,

April 30th; Freistadt in Silesia, May 1st; Venice, May 2nd; Vienna, May 3rd; Stettin and Lubeck, May 4th; Frankfort-on-the-Oder, Prague, Hamburg, and Leipzig, May 5th; Mayence, May 6th; Lower Saxony, May 9th; Frankfort-on-the-Main, May 14th; Amsterdam, May 17th; and Antwerp, May 24th. The indications of place and date stood in the margin.

Here is the first paragraph, and a portion of the last:—

Constantinople, 2nd April, 1631.—The King of Persia, with 15,000 horses and 50,000 foot soldiers, besieges Dille, at two days' march from Babyln, where the Graud Signior has ordered all his janissaries to muster under pain of death; and continues, notwithstanding this occupation, to wage a merciless war against those who use tobacco, condemning them to be suffocated by smoke.*

Antwerp, 24th May.—The drum beats all over North Germany. It is hoped that the Dutch will make no greater show this year than they did last, for we shall attack them first. . . . We have good chiefs; amongst others, the Marquises of St. Croix and Ayton, the Duke of Lerma, Don Carle Colonne, Counts John of Nassau and Henri de Bergue, who has the command in chief on land, and Count de Vaquens, who is vice-admiral, and to whom has been granted 350,000 crowns a year to defray the expenses of his fleet.

The bulk of the matter inserted was furnished direct by Richelieu from the Foreign Office, and several of the paragraphs were written in his own hand. This accounts for the accuracy of the information, and also for the serious tone the paper assumed from the first. No French notes appear till the sixth number, bearing date July 4th, 1631, and then we light upon this:—

Paris, 3rd July.—Here is being continued the beautiful impression of the great Bible in nine volumes and eight languages, which will be completed in a year. We invite all nations to take part in it, with better reason than the Sybarites who convoked the guests to their feasts a year beforehand.

In the seventh number, July 11th, 1631, appears this piece of court intelligence:—

St. Germain-en-Laye, 10th July.—The Marquis of La Fuente del Soro, sent by the Catholic King to congratulate his Majesty on recovering his health at Lyons, and who arrived a month ago, is about to return to Spain, which country shows France by this act that she is really in no hurry to pay her compliment, seeing that everybody had forgotten the King's illness. His Majesty gracefully conveyed this by remarking that he had been in good health these ten months. Thus Tiberius, condoled with tardily by the Thebans on the death of his nephew Germanicus, replied that he was unable to console himself for the loss of their great captain Achilles, so unhappily slain before Troy. In truth, and grace be to God, his Majesty was never better in his life.

The publication of the *Gazette* was continued uninterruptedly from week to week, but the press of matter was so great that Renaudot took to issuing a Supplement with the last number of every month. In this he

* This anti-tobacconist Sultan was Amurath IV. The Schah Abbas, his contemporary, ordered that all snuff-takers should have their noses cut off. Pope Innocent VIII. excommunicated smokers, and doomed them to hell-fire; and our own dull James I. wrote a silly book against them.

condensed the reports of the preceding numbers, corrected errors, added fresh news, and answered his detractors, who, as may be surmised, had gathered in squads, large and vindictive enough to form a fine host at every new step he made in public usefulness. One is really bound to think well of human nature on seeing that this unfortunate man, who had never done any one an ill turn in his life, who was invariably gentle, humane, and public-spirited, and who made use of the great influence he possessed both with the King and the Cardinal for no other ends than those of charity and mercy, was nevertheless harried, reviled, and plagued in a hundred petty ways, as if he were the lowest of charlatans. It is difficult to convey an idea of the torrents of abuse in rich medico-dog Latin which Guy Patin and the rest of the Doctors' school poured down on him. Guy Patin calls him *Cacophraste Renaudot*, "*nebulo hebdomadarius, omnium bipedum nequissimus et mendacissimus et maledicentissimus, qui indiget heleboro aut acriori medicina, flamma et ferro.*" Then when Renaudot, instead of flying into a passion, replies with seraphic mildness, Patin shrieks,—"*Habet frontem meretricis, nescit erubescere!*" One may remark that it argues a large degree of independence that a man like Patin should have dared thus to speak of an enterprise which was known to be as much Richelieu's as Renaudot's own. But Richelieu was too great a man to care for the crowing of small birds. There is something very grand and statesmanlike in the patronage which this king among ministers bestowed upon the gazetteer. He did not meddle with him, left him to manage his own affairs and fight his own battles; but whatever assistance Renaudot required, that he gave at once freely and generously; and if Renaudot had been viciously inclined, and had asked for the extermination of any of his persecutors, the Cardinal would unquestionably have made short work of these gentlemen.* As it was, Renaudot naively disputed with his enemies once a month, and soon he had the sense to give up even that. At the end of the year 1631 he suppressed his monthly Supplement, increased the *Gazette* to eight pages, and announced that for the future he would issue Supplements as they were needed. It seems they were needed pretty often, for towards the beginning of the year 1633 Renaudot published Supplements, under the title of *Ordinaires* and *Extraordinaires*, as often as twice,

* A fact to the eternal honour of Renaudot, and in a less measure, to that of Richelieu, deserves notice here. When the Cardinal, for state reasons, cruelly put to death Urbain Grandier, Renaudot, though bound to Richelieu by so many obligations, had the courage to publish an eloquent pamphlet in vindication of the murdered man, who was his fellow-townsmen. Richelieu was well aware that Renaudot had done this, but he took no notice of it, and never abated his kindness. The factis, Richelieu was the man to commit a crime when the interests of his policy seemed to need it, but he had too much magnanimity to resent the judgment which might be passed on his action by an honest mind, considering the matter superficially, without a knowledge of the motives which had prompted it. Well might Peter the Great, when he visited Paris, go straight to the tomb of Richelieu, and, kneeling by it, exclaim: "Great man! were you alive, I would give you half my empire, if you would teach me to govern the other half!"

and even three times in one week. In fact, whenever a budget of news arrived which would nowadays justify a special edition, the indefatigable editor set his criers afoot with a fresh printed sheet, shouting, "Buy the *Extraordinaire*, containing the account of the superb burial of the King of Denmark!" or, "Buy and read of the capture of the beautiful island of Curaçoa in the Indies by the Dutch from the Spaniards!" Renaudot understood the noble art of puffing. He dressed his criers in red, and gave them a trumpet apiece to go and bray the praises of the *Gazette* on the off days, when the paper did not appear.

All the *Gazettes* for the year 1681, thirty-two in number, were bound up in a volume at the end of the twelvemonth, along with a portrait of Renaudot and two prefaces, one to the King, the other to the public. Poor dreary Louis XIII. was very fond of Renaudot, and took a childish pleasure in the *Gazette* as in a new toy. As Richelieu wisely left his Majesty few of the cares of state, the King was reduced to looking out of the window and dismally gaping when there was no battle or hunting going on; accordingly it was a rare treat to him when he could slip out in disguise of an evening to the Rue de la Calandre, accompanied by a couple of his gentlemen, and stand watching prose of his own being set up in type. He was a frequent contributor. The quarrels he had with his wife, Anne of Austria, cost him much misery; but he revenged himself by writing spiteful bits about her Majesty and her pet Spanish courtiers; and laughed in his royal sleeve when all these people cackled about in their amazement with copies of the impudent sheet in their hands. One of the kingly notes which Renaudot inserted,* at a time when a royal divorce was in serious contemplation, was remembered by Anne of Austria, and nearly brought Renaudot into trouble after the King died; but so long as Louis XIII. lived he would hear no evil of his gazetteer: and, when some flushed Spaniard came to ask for redress, his Majesty played moodily with the tips of his gloves, and looked far away out of the window, as if he were deaf. Renaudot may well be excused for writing of his King, under these circumstances, in a strain somewhat hyperbolic. In his preface he vows that Louis XIII. has earned more glory by himself alone than all his predecessors put together, and he adds: "For the rest, Sire, my journal is the *gazette* of kings and rulers of the earth. All that is in it is for them and by them, and is intended to serve their glory." In his preface to the public, Renaudot breaks into a more humorous vein, and sketches the tribulations from which many an editor since his time has suffered. "Soldiers would like to see the paper teem with battles and feats of arms; litigants

* It is in the number dated 4th June, 1633, or rather in some of them, for the note was sent down by Richelieu when half the edition had been struck off. Renaudot was obliged to stop the presses and find place for the note, which contained twenty-eight lines. It was inserted at the end of the paper, but some copies of the original edition had already been sold, so that there are two different *Gazettes* extant bearing date June 4, 1633. The first edition, however, is very rare; and we believe no collection of the *Gazette* contains both numbers.

would have it full of law reports; the devout care for nothing but lists of preachers and précis of sermons" (in his fourteenth number, first year, Renaudot began to publish regularly, "A list of preachers in all the churches next Sunday"); "those who have not been to court, would never tire of seeing us describe court pageants, and those who have carried so much as a parcel in safety from Paris to St. Germain are offended if they do not see the exploit recorded with full honours in our pages." Renaudot explains the impossibility of satisfying everybody, and concludes with the assurance that he shall always be delighted to publish news of general interest, and to accept any corrections or suggestions for the improvement of his paper which may be offered him.

It appears that Renaudot for a while conducted the *Gazette* entirely by himself; but as he kept up his agencies, his loan-office and his dispensary, the tax on his time was too great, and he was obliged, with Richelieu's assistance, to organize a regular staff. Mézeray, Bautru, Voiture, and La Calprenède became the foremost among his fellow-contributors, and they were all remarkable men, whose equals in scholarship and professional dignity it would be difficult to find on the French press of the year 1673. Their functions were rather to edit or translate the correspondence from abroad into good French, than to furnish matter or opinions of their own; and in this they succeeded so well that the *Gazette* was reputed from its foundation until 1792, as the most correctly written of all newspapers. Voltaire, who was not an indulgent critic, says in the *Encyclopædia* that the *Gazette de France* has always been "revised with great care and composed in excellent French;" and Grimm, writing in 1769, calls the *Gazette* "the most insipid, impolite, and correctly edited of all newspapers." The impoliteness refers to a habit which the *Gazette* had contracted of never qualifying any one, save members of the Royal Family, as "Monsieur." In mentioning noblemen, their titles alone were given as "Le Duc de" instead of "M. le Duc de;" all untitled persons were designated as "le Sieur." . . . Voltaire could not stomach this formula either, and Grimm exclaims in his disgust, "It is supremely impertinent and ridiculous to write twice a week 'Le Sieur Pitt' when the Sieur Pitt is the arbiter of the old continent and the new.* But the *Gazette* clung to this old tradition, on the ground that, being an official journal, it was bound to give the King's subjects those titles only which of right belonged to them.

The staff of the *Gazette* were not paid out of the profits of that paper, but by pensions from the Civil List, averaging in the case of the four gentlemen above alluded to, 1,500 crowns a year (160*l.*, equivalent to 500*l.* of our money). The *Gazette* can never have been worked at a profit, nor, indeed, have paid its expenses. The Supplements were too

* The term Sieur (Sir) means really the same thing as Monsieur (My Sir), but there is the conventional difference between the two which exists between Mr. and Esquire in England. The French law writs, summonses, and judgments denominate all untitled persons to this day as "le Sieur," much to the humiliation of these professed lovers of equality.

numerous, and the price, considering the size of the paper, much too small. In addition to this, Renaudot was, from the first, trammelled by shameless piracies. Provincial publishers reprinted the *Gazette* as soon as it reached them, adding some local items to give it an extra zest, and sold the whole under titles of their own. Renaudot was obliged to appeal to the law courts, and eventually it was arranged that certain publishers at Avignon, Lyons, Rouen, Aix, and Bordeaux should have the privilege of reprinting, subject to a yearly payment. But it was not without trouble that Renaudot secured this settlement, and meanwhile sundry Parisian printers had begun to emulate their country brethren, and pirated Renaudot under his very nose. The principles of copyright were but imperfectly understood then, and it seemed a gross thing to the printers of Paris that Renaudot should enjoy the exclusive prerogative of printing news, "the which," as they contended, "being things of public interest, were no man's private property, but belonged to everybody." Renaudot himself was a little hazy in his views, and instead of arguing that the works of a man's brain were as much his as the works of his hands, based his case entirely on the royal monopoly he had obtained, and pleaded energetically that nobody had the right to publish an opposition print of any sort whatever. The advantages of a spirited business competition had evidently not penetrated his mind, nor had they that of Louis XIII., who, in a series of choleric decrees signed at Fontainebleau and Paris, threatened with his severest wrath any who should continue their piracies, "to the great grief, hurt, and scandal of our truly well-beloved liege the Sieur Renaudot." The Parliament of Paris judged to the same effect. The *Gazette* was ruled to be a monopoly in the hands of Renaudot and his heirs for ever; and on the death of Renaudot, he was succeeded by his sons Eusebe and Isaac, who in their turn bequeathed the *Gazette* to Eusebe junior, son of the elder brother, who took orders and consequently left no progeny. After this the *Gazette* became Government property, like the *London Gazette*, and Louvois appointed M. de Guilleragues, gentleman of the bed-chamber and private secretary to the King, to be editor at a salary of 10,000 livres. The size of the paper was then increased from eight pages to twelve. After M. de Guilleragues, came M. de Bellizani, a renowned wit; and his two next successors were courtiers skilled in writing, but not otherwise remarkable. In 1762 the *Gazette* was annexed to the Foreign Office Department, and appeared for the first time with the royal arms, and twice a week instead of once. The publishing days were Monday and Friday; the paper was reduced to four pages and the subscription lowered from eighteen to twelve livres a year, M. Raymond de St. Albine, a scholar and gentleman of excellent family, being appointed editor at a salary of 15,000 livres (600*l.*) M. de St. Albine did not keep this editorship long, and it was conferred jointly on two men renowned for their friendship, Suard and the Abbé Arnaud. These, thanks to the Duchess of Grammont, sister to the Duke of Choiseul, the Prime Minister, obtained that they should manage the financial as well as the literary department, and divide the

profits with the Foreign Office. The *Gazette* had become a paying concern by that time, and the editors shared 20,000 livres a year between them. On the fall of Choiseul, however, Suard and Arnaud were dismissed in favour of a police censor called Marin, whose peculiar style of composition—sensational as it would be termed now—put in vogue the word *marinade* as applied to all writing that was high-flown and affected. Marin was turned out with some ignominy on the accession of Louis XVI. in 1774, and the editorship fell to a clever priest, who had already conducted several other journals—l'Abbé Aubert. But the Abbé soon showed that he was more at home in financial duties, and was relegated to the managership, while the titular editor became one M. Bret, an honest, but dull man, "whose only sin," says La Harpe, "is, that he has persisted in writing forty years without talent." Bret was only titular editor, because at this time Louis XVI. took to revising all the proofs of the *Gazette de France* himself. He was very expert in that business, and had a peculiar editorial tact for excising redundancies and toning down the whole journal to a uniform style, clear, classic, and sober. In this respect he resembled the late King Otho of Greece, who paid much more attention to the grammar and punctuation of the memoirs addressed to him than to the substance of them. In 1787 the publisher, Pancoucke, who was striving to get a newspaper monopoly by buying up all the journals in Paris, offered to take the management of the *Gazette* and to pay 50,000 livres a year for the privilege, the Government, of course, retaining its supervision over the matter inserted. This was agreed to; M. Fontanelle became editor, and the *Gazette de France* continued to appear under royal patronage until May 1st, 1792, when its official ties were snapped and it came out as a private and republican journal with the date "Fourth Year of Freedom." The *Gazette* has flourished with more or less brilliancy ever since, and has been for the last fifty years a legitimist organ, read chiefly in the provinces.

So Théophraste Renaudot founded a paper which has survived to this day; but he made no fortune out of it, nor out of his many other inventions for the public good. He died poor, and his last years were embittered by all sorts of troubles, professional and domestic. In the first place, his old enemy, Guy Patin, fell upon him as soon as Richelieu was gone, and in the second place he was ill-advised enough to take for his second wife, at the age of seventy-two, a pretty girl, who might have been his grandchild. Cardinal Mazarin shielded him to some extent from the persecutions of Patin, as Richelieu had done; but nothing short of a divorce could save him from his wife. He obtained the divorce, after his flighty spouse had squandered the little substance he had amassed, and dishonoured his grey hairs in more ways than one. But he never recovered from the blow, pined away, and died broken-hearted. Guy Patin unwillingly composed the finest of epitaphs for the man whom he had always traduced as a money-grasping charlatan, by writing (12th November, 1658), "Last month old Renaudot died here, poor as a painter."

IV.

For several years previous to Renaudot's death newspapers had begun to crop up to right and left without its being possible to check them. Louis XIII. and Richelieu both died in 1642, and the Regency which followed being a weak thing, printers laughed at monopoly and brought out sheets, which led a hole and corner existence for a few weeks, were suppressed, reappeared again under new titles, and scattered false intelligence, slanders, and scandals more and more disgusting, broadcast among the willing Parisians. Old Renaudot had exclaimed once, in warning foreign sovereigns of the uselessness of trying to prohibit the importation of his *Gazette* into their dominions: "Newspapers are a merchandise of which it is in vain to impede the trade. They are like torrents which swell by resistance." He now found this out on his own account. Nevertheless, the purity and high patronage of the *Gazette* kept it afloat; but in 1649, when the Fronde* broke out, the flood of periodicals and pamphlets was such that nothing but the extreme cleverness of Renaudot enabled him and his monopoly to weather the few stormy years that followed. The Fronde began by a tax question, in which the Parliament of Paris took the popular side against Mazarin, who was accused of seeking to grind down the French nation. The English Parliament had set the example of making war on its King, and the Parisian Parliament, which, be it remembered, was a judicial and not a political institution—waxed so very valiant that if there had been a man of brains among them capable of guiding a revolution, the French might have set up a constitutional government there and then. But the French have always been defter at making revolutions than at profiting by them, and nothing came of this prolonged riot but a few thousand broken heads and torrents of ink. The affair began by the expulsion of Mazarin with the Queen Regent from Paris, and the capital remained in possession of the Parliament and of that Right Reverend Cardinal de Retz, who chanted mass with the hilt of a dagger peeping out of his pocket. Mazarin went to St. Germain's, but, wishing to fight his antagonists with their own weapons, that is, lampoons, he took with him a printing-press, and Renaudot along with his staff to work the same. Renaudot was pleased, for he foresaw the opportunity of making his peace with Anne of Austria, who had never liked him; but he felt some concern as to what might become of his monopoly of the *Gazette* if the party in Paris prevailed; and so he ingeniously left his two sons behind him to found a paper of their own, which should be the official organ of the Fronde, whilst the *Gazette* established in the

* *Fronde* means sling; and this four-years' civil war derived its name from the slings with which the small boys of Paris used to break the windows of the court party at the outset of the proceedings. In the popular conversations of the day the war was dignified by another name, which Voltaire records in his *Siecle de Louis XIV.*, but which is too funny and French to be translated.

Orangery of St. Germain remained the mouthpiece of the court party. This happy thought worked immensely well. Renaudot's sons started the *Courrier Français*, which had a furious sale, and was at once adopted by the Parliament. Mazarin rubbed his hands to think that the trusted organ of his enemies was conducted by men devoted to himself; and the Parliament felt equally convinced that the two sons of Renaudot would obtain for them through their father some useful notes as to court doings. A gentleman named St. Julien helped to popularise the *Courrier Français* by publishing a burlesque edition of it in verse as soon as it appeared. The *Courrier* came out on Fridays; the burlesque was on sale every Sunday morning.

The first year of the Fronde was marked chiefly by publications of a fantastic character—*Visions, Apparitions, Prognostications*. The writing was weak and wild. None of the writers knew what they wanted. Gazettes, pamphlets, rhyming squibs, were all levelled at Mazarin's personal peculiarities, his Italian pronunciation, his well-known relations towards the Queen, his greed and his supposed avarice. The counter lampoons edited by Mazarin's paid friends splashed the Cardinal de Retz with ridicule, overhauled the private lives of the Parliamentary big-wigs, related very queer, and let us hope improbable, stories about their wives; and saw "*Visions*" of gibbet trees with parliamentarians swinging therefrom when his Eminence should re-enter the city. Altogether it was a lively period to live in, and we cannot imagine a Parisian bourgeois of the year 1649 finding time hang dully on his hands. In the second year the writing was more ambitious: Political questions were tackled; Mazarin had returned to Paris for a short time, then vanished; so his foreign policy was reviewed, and whilst some bitterly upbraided the Treaty of Westphalia (which gave Alsace to France) as contrary to the interests of the Church, which was likely to suffer by the influx of Protestants, others violently taunted the man with having none of the diplomatic statesmanship of his glorious predecessor, Richelieu. The year 1651 was signalised by a union between all the rival subdivisions of the Fronde, the Retz, Beaufort, Parliament, and Condé factions; then by the rupture of these, and by a complete chaos in the way of opinions. The pamphlets and news-sheets redoubled in number and virulence. Mazarin had been mauled and mangled till there was nothing more to say of him; so the lampooners turned their shafts on the Queen Regent, and by-and-by on the institution of Royalty itself. Thomas Aniello (better known as Masaniello) had stirred up a rebellion at Naples, and the English had beheaded their King. What was the use of a Crown—why should not the people set up a Republic? Declamations about liberty, the rights of the poor, and the oppressions of the rich, began to find their way into print. Two publications, the *Franco-Gallia* and the *Junius Brutus*, preached levelling by fire and sword, and the cry was no longer, "Are you for this party or for that?" but, "Are you for the People and the People's Parliament?" This is the time when the writing ceased to

be frivolous, and when authors of true merit plunged into the fray. Menage, Gondi, Joly, Sarrazin, Patru, Caumartin, Portail, and Dubosc-Montandré were all thinkers and polemicists of nerve, and if there had been a Rizzio or a Cromwell among this populace of caper-cutters, whose brains they ignited, it might have fared badly with that little kingling who blossomed out so grandly in the sequel as Louis XIV. But all was talk and froth, and by the year 1652 the people had got disheartened, and yearning for peace. They no longer believed in the Parliament, whose members had shown themselves pitifully timid and incapable; they had spent their rage against Mazarin; and in their feverish dejection they inclined towards the Prince of Condé, not because they liked that haughty patrician, but because they fancied the victor of Rocroy was the only man likely to restore quiet. The pamphleteer, Dubosc-Montandré, who was in the Prince's pay, battled in the front all through this year with essays which offer a curious medley of aristocratical and republican sentiments. The man had in him all the stuff of an agitator, and with another year or two's practice, and a more intelligent public to work on, might have proved as dangerous as Mirabeau. He advocated a union between the nobility and the people as against the Crown and the bourgeoisie. Richelieu, following in this the policy of Louis XI., had leaned wholly on the middle classes in his struggle against the last strongholds of feudalism. The bourgeoisie had been suffered to rear their heads whilst the nobles had been forced to bend their necks to the yoke; and Dubosc-Montandré appealed to all the grievances cherished by working-men against those whom he called "their natural enemies, the bourgeois," to put an end to this state of things. As far as can be gathered from his rather confused schemes, Montandré would have had the country governed by a show king, a powerful senate of nobles, and a lower house of working-men. But the first half of this plan was evidently made to order; and at heart Montandré was a demagogue with little love of the nobility, for occasionally he forgets that he is salaried by a Condé, and breaks out into that stirring cry which was borrowed from him a hundred and fifty years later by Loustalot, and formed one of the war-shouts of the Revolution: "The great are only great because we carry them on our shoulders. Let us shake them off, and they will strew the ground." *

On the whole, the revolution, which might have effected so much, had fallen into hash. The Duke of Orleans, rousing himself at length, remonstrated with the Parliament at the insults which were being hawked about against the Queen; and the Parliament, relieved to be bullied again by somebody, seized hold of one Morlot, a sarcastic fellow and a journalist,

* Loustalot put the thing in another way. He wrote: "*Les grands ne nous paraissent grands que parceque nous sommes à genoux. . . Levons-nous!*" ("The great only seem so to us because we are on our knees. . . Let us stand up!"). And he printed this as a permanent motto at the head of his paper, "*Les Révolutions de Paris.*"

and sentenced him to be hanged. But the printers of Paris, who had driven a brisk trade during the four years' turmoil, were loth to see their profits vanish, and so, as Morlot was being led to his doom along with a lesser journalist, who was to have a whipping at the cart's tail, an army of compositors charged to the rescue of the pair, beat back the archers, put the hangman and his aids to flight, and made a bonfire of the cart, gibbet, and other paraphernalia. However, this was the last gasp of the Fronde. Not long after, the much-hated Mazarin returned coolly to Paris, for the second time, and by way of finally crushing a pamphleteering and journalistic committee which had worked for a long while under Cardinal de Retz's orders, and was now being managed by Retz's henchman Gondi, and by the satirical Menage, he caused a mighty volume of 700 quarto pages in his defence to be distributed about Paris, as we nowadays spread tracts. It had been written in 1649, by a certain Gabriel Naudé, and is now known as the *Mascurat*, though its real title was *Jugement de tout ce qui a été écrit contre le Cardinal Mazarin*, &c. In it a printer called Mascurat holds a dialogue with a vendor of *Mazarinades* (anti-Mazarin pamphlets) St. Ange, and the two pass in review every book published against the Cardinal, touching as they do on all the topics and people of the day. The whole thing is in the style of the famous *Satire Menippée*, which enlivened the wars of the League, and is uncommonly brilliant and clever. Indeed, the late novelist, Charles Nodier, had so high an opinion of the book, that he treated it as Lord Lytton did *Gil Blas*, and made a point of re-reading it once at least every year, alleging that no work gives a better insight into the manners, institutions, politics, and language of the times. The fact is, *Mascurat* is very exhaustive; it leaves no question untouched, and the anti-Mazarinists must well have found it a heavy shot to bear up against. In truth, however, they made no effort to bear up, but collapsed. The laugh was against them; the wily Italian had conquered by pen as well as by state craft, and the flood of ink and paper which had raged over Paris during nigh fifty months receded, as every flood must do which bursts through natural bounds. From the beginning of 1649 to the end of 1652, 4,000 polemical books, pamphlets, and newspapers had been published, and from such a mound of printing the liberty of the press ought surely to have arisen strong and unassailable to all time. But the Parisians had little care for liberty, having been drugged to surfeiting with licence; they sickened at the mention of politics; they wanted to be amused, and they turned with a laugh of welcome towards the new star then dawning in journalism, *The Muse Historique*, or *Rhyiming Gazette* of Jacques Loret.

V.

Loret was born of poor parents in the first years of the seventeenth century, and had no better education than that which the ragged-school of an obscure village could afford. He came to Paris when he was twenty, a

being possessed of no capital but his wits, turned newsman. He had all the qualities needful for success in that trade: a good pair of legs, indefatigable lungs, and imagination enough to invent alarming or mirthful occurrences when facts were at a discount. By-and-by he took to writing fugitive poems; but as the publishers' price for such productions was three livres the printed ream, he based his hopes of fortune rather on the dedications he inscribed at the head of his lyrics than on these works themselves. It was very soothing to a big personage of that time, duke, financier, or what not, to find a fellow of Loret's stamp waiting in his ante-rooms on reception days with a copy of verses neatly tuned in his honour. If the verses were really good, the big personage would smile and request the poet to read them aloud; a gratuity of a few livres naturally followed, and in course of months the poet was made free of the big personage's household, which means that he was entitled to come every day at noon and dine in the servants' hall, with the upper domestics. This was no mean privilege, and soon Loret secured himself a footing in half-a-dozen noble houses, so that supper as well as dinner might be available for the asking. A few *grandeess* lodged their poets as well as fed them, and paid them a fixed salary, that they might write verses or news—for the two things still went pretty much together, as in the troubadour days—for no one else. But Loret was too free a lance to let himself be chained and kennelled. He had a lodging of his own, perched high in a garret of the Rue de la Huchette, and he loved to disport himself therein after his own fashion when his day's rhyming was over, and his patrons had supplied him with pocket-money. However, in his fortieth year, he was presented to the beautiful Mdle. de Longueville, afterwards Duchesse de Nemours, who forthwith took him under her protection with a pension of 250 livres a year, and a dinner once a week, not in the servants' hall, but at her own table; and from this date Loret was an enslaved man.

One need not be a down-at-heel Frenchman, with a romantic soul, to feel desperately enamoured of a lovely princess, who bestows praise, money, and good cheer with equal grace. Mdle. de Longueville was the loveliest woman of her day. The saturnine Duke of La Rochefoucauld, who had a flint-stone in lieu of heart, and who afterwards wrote the *Maxims*, had lost his head to her completely, and was driven by her influence to side with the Condé party in the Fronde, to make war on his King, and at an early date to forfeit the temporary use of his eyesight in consequence of a gunshot wound. When his grace discovered that the siren had been only flirting to win his sword and his influence, but not his worship, he revenged himself by some epigrams, cold as steel, and professed to hold himself cheap for ever having loved a "Précieuse," that is a Blue-stocking. Mdle. de Longueville was certainly "blue," but that may have been one of the reasons for the adoration she inspired in Loret as well as in the late philosopher, Victor Cousin, who sighed that he had not been born in the seventeenth century, for her sake. Certainly, it must have been delightful to hear this charming woman prattle gravely about

things abstruse, and affect to speak only in well-rounded periods of faultless grammar. She was one of the early founderesses of those literary gatherings which attained such renown in the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and lavished her bounties freely among a crew of poetasters, whom she naïvely thought sublime. Poor Loret compared her to Venus and Minerva, and began to dream about her waking and sleeping. He never, of course, had the impudence to confess in plain words that he loved a princess of royal blood; but he shows it in his dithyrambic outbursts, and from the day when his goddess requested him to bring her every week a string of news in rhyme, he considered that his pen and his brains were at her exclusive service. Regularly every Saturday morning, for a space of fifteen years, through sunshine or rain, snow or bullet-hail, war or peace, Loret trudged through the streets to the Hôtel de Longueville with his rhyming gazette of 250 verses in his pocket. At first the gazette was manuscript; by-and-by twelve copies were printed for circulation among the princess's friends; but the success became so great, and the piracies so numerous, that Mdlle. de Longueville begged that Loret would publish his gazette for general sale. He did so, and cleared large profits. There never was a paper so much admired, so largely sought after, nor so uniformly good. Loret computed in 1663, in the thirteenth year of his enterprise, that he had written over 300,000 verses, and found more than 700 different exordiums. It is a fact that he never twice began his gazettes with the same *entrée en matière*. The paper was in epistolary form, inscribed to the princess, and terminated with the date in rhyme, as:—

J'ai fait ces vers tout d'une haleine
Le jour d'après la Madeleine.
Fait, appuyé contre un lambris
Dies quindecim Octobris.

These dates were never alike; and, as though to flirt with difficulties, Loret coined a new epithet every week to qualify his letters, calling them, *Épître, sérieuse, gaie, folâtre* and so on; till in the end, having pumped the dictionary dry, as it were, he flourished such adjectives as *ambulateur, assaisonnée* and *jubilée*. Another point to be mentioned is, that Loret never had anybody to help him. He ran about for his own news, and, however hurried might be his composition, never once wrote a line that would not scan. His prolonged and always equal performance is something unique in the history of journalism. The fortnightly review of current politics which M. Eugène Forcade wrote for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, killed him after driving him mad at the end of ten years. Henri Rochefort suppressed his *Lanterne* after two years from sheer exhaustion; and even the veteran Alphonse Karr has never been able to keep up his weekly *Guêpes* for five consecutive years. And yet the writings of Forcade, Rochefort, and Karr are in prose. These journalists never had to hunt for a line of their news; telegrams and newspapers brought them matter as much as they wanted, and they had no reason to torture their heads for rhymes and metre. It is true that Loret broke down, too, and

gave up the ghost under his self-imposed task, but to have continued it during fifteen years, to have written up to the week that preceded his death, and to have left a name so unimpaired that many of the best writers of the time aspired to the honour of carrying on his work after him, is a feat that must command the admiration of those who have ever undertaken to make the public laugh regularly once a week, and who know the difficulties of the labour.

Previously to his introduction to Mlle. de Longueville, Loret had been a poor devil, glad enough for a few crowns and a cut off menial joints; and he never at any time quite ceased to be a poor devil, for he was devoured by the passion for gambling, and was the unluckiest gamester in existence. But he had money enough, friends and flattery enough, became an honoured guest at great houses, and took to dressing in black velvet and silk hose. Mlle. de Longueville looked after him in a half sisterly way, and chided him on the vanity of bowls and tennis, to which he was over addicted. But these lectures always ended by a recourse to the lady's purse, and Loret retired from the presence the richer by a rouleau of louis. Other powerful people gave him sops and pensions. Mazarin, whom Loret respected and defended, put him down for a pension of 200 crowns, and Fouquet, the prodigal Superintendent of Finances, did likewise. When Fouquet was thrown into prison, rather owing to the King's personal envy than because of his huge embezzlements of public monies, Loret was one of the few writers who had the courage to stand up for his fallen patron; and Fouquet, much affected by this generous constancy, the news of which was brought to him in his prison by Mlle. de Scudéry, charged that lady to give Loret 1,500 livres. The act was the more liberal as Fouquet had become almost destitute; and he had the delicacy to request that the gift might be made anonymously, so that Mlle. de Scudéry called on Loret, and deposited this sum on his mantel-shelf when his back was turned. Mazarin continued to pension Loret all his life, and bequeathed him 200 crowns a year in his will, to the poet's no little emotion; on the other hand, Louis XIV. bore him a grudge for his gratitude towards Fouquet, and Loret might have lived without any court recognition, had not Colbert smoothed matters by representing that this journalist was a loyal subject and a useful ally, though he might become a troublesome foe. Marie de Mancini, niece to Mazarin, and a woman of rare beauty, whom the King had worshipped in his boyhood, stood in some dread of Loret's satirical pen, and with her own fair hands stuffed his purse full of gold pieces, laughing to him the while to "open his mouth and shut his eyes," one evening after he had been bidden to sup with her. In addition to all this, Loret received considerable bounties from divers insignificant people, who wanted to be puffed in his columns. He did puff them, nor was it the least proof of his versatile genius that he should have wrought witty rhymes in praise of vulgar passions and wrinkled but immodest old women. In this respect of venality Loret was by no means such a pattern of incorruptible

manhood as old Renaudot. The father of French journalism resolutely set his face against venal puffing, and once threatened to publish the names of persons who came to him with bribes. Tallemant des Reaux says that Loret wrote for any one who paid him; and adds that all the ladies of the day were mad to get this brilliant chronicler to attend their feasts, in order that he might give public reports of them. But Tallemant goes rather too far. Loret only puffed unimportant people, whose praise or blame would be of no public consequence. He was independent, honest, and very fearless in his strictures on public characters, and nothing could have induced him to take a political line other than that which his conscience dictated for mere money's sake. This is one of the features that lend such a genial ring to his writings. During the Fronde (Loret began his manuscript gazettes in 1650), he took care to steer very adroitly between extremes, and pointed his irony at injustice or foolery wherever he detected it. He was never a servile partyman, though he worked for a princess who, according to the wont of her sex, threw into her politics a greater amount of combativeness than was always required. But, to do *Mdlle. de Longueville* justice, she never tried to tamper with Loret's convictions. She was grateful for the pretty things he wrote every week about her, pleased when her views and his were similar, and on all occasions thanked him smilingly, like a kind-hearted and noble lady as she was.

It is a puzzle how Loret came to acquire such a command of language, and to write French so elegant and perfect in its orthography. When he arrived at Paris he must have been well-nigh illiterate, and the duties of a newsman were not calculated to leave him either time or opportunity for study. Possibly he picked up Latin by attending mass, for he was a regular church-goer; but he confesses to knowing nothing of the classics :—

Ma chambre encore qu'un peu basse,
 Me tient lieu de Mont de Parnasse ;
 De l'eau fraîche plein un flacon
 Est ma fontaine d'Hélicon ;
 Plusieurs voisines que je prise
 Sont les Muses que je courtise ;
 Bref, le bon ange protecteur
 Que m'a donné le Créateur
 Est l'Apollon que je consulte.

This allusion to the "voisines" in the same breath with his guardian angel, *Marie de Longueville*, shows that Loret was not a Frenchman for nothing. He had a merry face like a sarcastic weasel's, bright laughing eyes, and a sanguine temperament, that made him love wine, women, and all the other embellishments of life. He probably regarded his passion for *Mdlle. de Longueville* as something ethereal and supermundane, which could not be diminished or even desecrated by his affectionate relations with one or more affable "voisines;" and doubtless he had already drawn for his own behoof that subtle distinction which

so many of his eloquent countrymen have since expounded to us, between spiritual and cardial affinities. For all this, Loret was a thorough gentleman, and never once in his gazettes forgot that he was writing to a lady. On a single occasion, only, in the course of fifteen years, does he venture on a Rabelaisian anecdote; but even this, which has a rather salt taste to us now, must have been deemed harmless enough two centuries ago. Loret's gazettes were generally made up of all the pleasantest talk of the day, collected from sources which show acquaintance with the best society. He leaves no matter of interest unnoticed. He chronicles the death of Marion de Lorme; the decrees and wranglings of the Parliament; the misadventure that befel M. Benserade, the poet, who had his pocket picked of a quire of sonnets, and the disgust of the thief, who returned the same to his lodgings with profuse marginal criticisms; the introduction of pewter into common use; the best books and sermons of the day; the changes in fashions; an attempt to inaugurate street letter-boxes,* after the pattern of our modern pillar-boxes, which we have been flattering ourselves was a novelty; the plays of Molière, who was only then budding into fame, and whom Loret was the first to praise and encourage; the arrivals of distinguished strangers; and the demise of all notable individuals, amongst whom Renaudot, of whom Loret writes feelingly:—

Maintenant il est en repos,
Car on peut pieusement croire
Qu'il fit ici son purgatoire.

Loret, as we have said, became a great favourite in society; but the crowning of his honours was when he received regular invitations to attend the theatricals at court, and was served with refreshments between the acts, neither more nor less than if he were a nobleman of first degree. The poet exhibits a very pardonable pride at this favour, for to eat in the King's presence was a privilege only conferred on the highest in the land. Louis XIV., however, went further, for, stopping to accost the gazetteer one evening when the theatricals were over, he said, with that gracious affability which was the more prized for being so rarely lavished: "Monsieur Loret, your gazettes have afforded us great satisfaction, and we beg you will count us among your well-wishers." Loret strikes up a hymn of jubilation in his next impression; but he is too generous to take all the honour to himself, and ascribes the King's condescension to the fact that gazetteers "are no longer a despised body, but a corporation who have their status and dignity in the kingdom amongst all others who serve his Majesty by arts or arms." Thus, some hundred and seventy years before Mr. Canning was pleased to recognise the press as the

* In 1653 letter-boxes were set up in all the streets of Paris, and letters were to be collected in them three times a day for distribution *within* the capital. The postage rate was to be $\frac{1}{2}d.$ payable by the receiver. The "wittiest people in the world" poked fun at this invention, and filled the boxes with oyster-shells and mice, so that the scheme had to be abandoned.

fourth estate in the realm, that discovery had been made by the monarch who, of all others, was the greatest stickler for etiquette. It is true that this monarch, who never returned the salute of the proudest noble otherwise than by a slight bend of the head, waited by-and-by on Molière at table, in order to teach his courtiers how to respect genius.

Loret died in harness, poor and indebted, because of his miserable taste for gambling. In his last number (March 28th, 1665), he is confined to his room, and entreats rather piteously that those who owe him money shall bring it him to his lodgings, and not be angry with him for dunning them. Feeling his end approaching, he wrote to the Princess of Longueville, who had now become Duchess of Nemours, and in thanking her for what she had done for him, said he would continue his gazettes in heaven, in order that the angels might learn to know and love her as he did, and give her a fitting welcome when she came among them. This was probably the only letter which Loret ever wrote to his benefactress in prose; but such prose was worth poetry.

The death of Loret was mourned in Paris as a public calamity. The "dames de la Halle" (market-women) attended his funeral in a body; twelve noblemen acted as his pall-bearers; the Rue de la Huchette, where he had lived, was hung with black; and three hundred printers threw nosegays over his coffin as it was being lowered into its grave in the Cemetery of the Innocents. Great curiosity was expressed as to whether the *rhyming gazette* would be continued by anybody; and this question was solved the very next week by a poet called Charles Robinet, who began his *Lettres en Vers à Madame*, as if nothing had happened. However, other imitators sprang up at the same time. Whilst Loret lived, publishers had made repeated endeavours to start gazettes in rivalry to his, and among these was one written by no less a person than Scarron; but they had been distanced by simple force of talent. Besides this, Loret had ended by obtaining from the King a monopoly for his rhyming news, similar to that which the Renaudot family held for their prose gazette. But now that Loret was dead, competition seemed free; and, in addition to Robinet, there arose at least a score of rhymesters, the most famous of whom are Lagravète de Mayolas and Subligny. Robinet's *Lettres à Madame* were not addressed to the Duchess of Nemours, but to Madame Henriette, sister of Charles I. of England, and wife of Monsieur, the King's brother, the ill-fated and beautiful princess who died poisoned in 1670, and over whom Bossuet pronounced the noblest of his funeral orations. Lagravète de Mayolas followed exactly in Loret's footsteps, and made M^{de} de Nemours his divinity. His verses are good, though wanting in the variety and sparkle of Loret's; but Mayolas introduced a novelty in the shape of a serial novel, in letters published from week to week, and called "*Cliante et Celidie*." This is the first instance on record of serial fiction; and Mayolas has therefore a title to rank as the inventor of the *roman-feuilleton*. However, he was unequal to the continuous labour which had distinguished Loret. His letters appeared

pretty regularly at first, then gaps of a month at a time occurred, and the letters ceased altogether after three years. As to Subigny, he was a clever barrister, who had already in Loret's time tried to launch a rhyming *Muse de la Cour*, in opposition to the *Muse Historique*, which was the collective title of Loret's *gazette*. At Loret's death, he tried again, being pushed thereto by the publisher Tesselin, the man who had hoped successfully to pit Scarron against Loret. Scarron was an excellent writer, and perhaps in satire more than Loret's match; but he was useless to a publisher by reason of his unpunctuality. He wrote in 1665-6 fifteen comic epistles, since reprinted under the title of *Muse Heroï-Comique*, but he could not be prevailed upon to finish his copy in good time; besides which, he praised Loret, whom he had been set up to supplant, which was contrary to all traditions of literary competition, and put Tesselin in deep disgust. It does not seem that Tesselin made much by Subigny's verses, though he engaged this barrister after quarrelling with Scarron, and started him again after Loret's death. The fact is, Loret's mantle had descended on no one. His style, his facility, his unparalleled industry were peculiar to himself, and were buried with him. Mayolas had opened the new groove into which journalism must run by his essays at fiction. The journalism of the future was to be based on romance as well as news, on literature in its artistic sense as well as fact; and so this led to the creation of the *Mercur Galant* and the *Journal des Savants*.

But here we close the first era in the History of the French Press. In 1665, Louis XIV. was beginning to feel his own power, and to make it felt by the world. He was no longer the boy who had bowed under the tutelage of Mazarin; he was the king who said, "L'État c'est moi;" and the "Grand Règne" was dawning! For the next century politics were to vanish before the will of absolute monarchy; and journalism was to act as the satellite gravitating with more or less brilliancy round the literary planets which shone out with unrivalled lustre during that period from 1670 to 1770, which is the Golden Age of French Literature.

Willows: a Sketch.

CHAPTER V.

We must bury our dead joys,
And live above them with a living world.

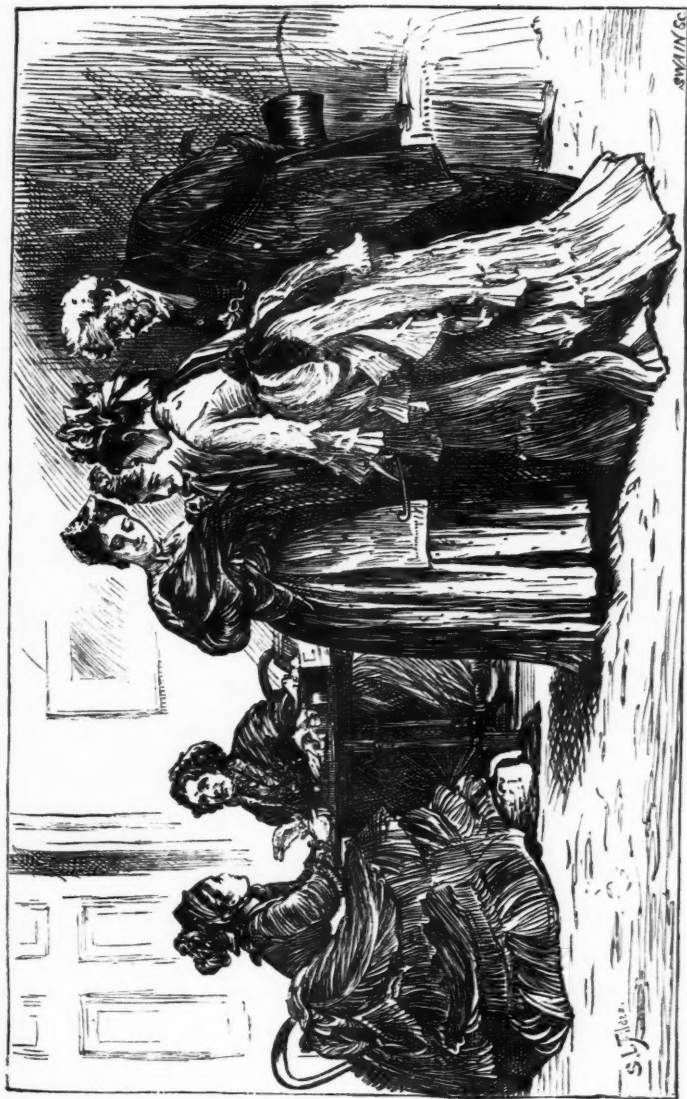
ARMGART.



DO not like to dwell on the interval between the engagement and the wedding. Happily the time was not long. The six years' close intimacy that had existed between the cottage and the Dene put out of court any plea for time for better acquaintance, and as Harry and Grace were to live with Sir Thomas and Lady Raymond at the Dene, there was no occasion to delay out of consideration for Mrs. Barnard, who, under the circumstances, could hardly be said to be losing her daughter at all. We were then in the last days of July, and when Harry pleaded that the wedding might take place on a late day in August, so that they might have the bright weather of early autumn for their honeymoon, no

objection was made, and the last day of August was fixed upon. Both Madeline and I were glad that it was so. Madeline possessed in a high degree the faculty—invaluable in large natures, but very fatal in small ones—of forcibly putting aside painful thoughts and throwing all the energies of heart and mind into the work of the moment. This faculty is the one safeguard of strongly sensitive natures: they cannot trust themselves to skim the waters of anguish—they know that the waves will pass over their heads, however they may resolve but to dip in the sole of their foot; for them there is no middle course between total abstinence and the unbridled licence of the drunkard; they must turn resolutely from the precipice before them, for if they but cast one look over the brink, an irresistible impulse will urge them to throw themselves into the abyss; they must strangle their emotions in the cradle, for they know that they will develop into giants from whose grasp they will be powerless to extri-

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A LITTLE BLUE FLANNEL BUNDLE WAS BROUGHT IN FOR INSPECTION

eate themselves. To such, active work is salvation. Wanting it, they either become morbid or adopt a defensive armour of affected cynicism which too often ends in real hardness of heart. As Madeline said—one grows hard by trampling down one's heart. There are some who recognise this truth, and make of it the key-note of a philosophy of licence: there are others who recognise it no less, but who see in it the expression of a need of human nature to be met only by a systematic cultivation of unselfish sympathies and a religious dedication of life to the service of others.

Madeline, following the sure instinct of a healthy nature, welcomed the multifarious bustle and activity that pervaded the cottage during the month of preparation for the wedding, and was thankful that she had work enough on her hands to fill every moment of the day.

While Grace and Harry dreamed away the summer days on the lawn and in the woods, she devised garments and directed needlewomen, made estimates of necessary expenses, and listened with unwearying patience to Mrs. Barnard's often reiterated hopes and fears and wonderings.

Mrs. Barnard's was one of those minds that occupy themselves by preference with the negative aspect of things. Her life seemed to consist in the multitude of things she did not possess. Had her astronomical studies gone so far as to acquaint her with the fact that there were spots in the sun, she would have thought of the sun from that moment as a thing that had spots in it. There could be no doubt that her daughter's engagement to Harry Raymond was, of all possible events, the one most calculated to afford her satisfaction. From a worldly point of view—an this was a point of view which, in a disguised form, was not unfamiliar to Mrs. Barnard—it was a very good match for Grace. Harry came of a good family and was heir to a fine estate and a fair fortune. Then Mrs. Barnard liked the Raymonds—they were *nice* people, and had been kind to her. When she had come into the neighbourhood six years ago, with nothing to recommend her as a desirable acquaintance but her worn-out, languid beauty and her ladylike weeds, Lady Raymond had been the first woman to call on her and offer such neighbourly help and kindness as it is still possible in the country for poor gentility to accept from wealthier neighbours without losing caste. The children had been made free of the Dene woods and gardens. Fruit and vegetables from the hothouses and garden, books from the library, and all those little extras and luxuries of life which are so much matters of course in the houses of the rich that they hardly think of them as costing money at all—but which are only known to people with what are called limited incomes, as bearing prohibitive prices—flowed in a constant stream from the big house to the cottage; so that Madeline, when by-and-by she began to think for herself and to express opinions on matters beyond home life, and it happened that those opinions were of the kind to which the terrible adjectives socialistic and communistic are applied, would laughingly excuse herself by saying that, if she had acquired communistic views, Lady Raymond herself was mainly respon-

sible for them, by having allowed her to grow up in the belief that all the good things at the Dene were the common property of the two households. Mrs. Barnard liked the match—that is, she would have felt that she had lived in vain if it had not come about, and yet to hear her talk sometimes, one would have thought that it cost her a great effort to allow it to go on. The trousseau was a great trouble to her. Madeline and I tried to make her take the common-sense view that, as Grace Raymond would be able to have many more clothes than Grace Barnard had ever possessed, it really was not a matter of vital importance to make every sixpence of the sum devoted to the outfit do the duty of a shilling, but Mrs. Barnard thought the trousseau should be of a quantity and quality that accorded with things at the Dene rather than with things at the cottage, and so all the ingenuity in the house was taxed to the uttermost to make as good a show as possible. Then there were Harry's heterodox views. I must own I had a malicious pleasure in drawing Mrs. Barnard out on this subject. She attached a great deal of importance to the stock of phrases and observances which she called her religion, and by which she believed she lived, and it was a matter of real distress to her that her future son-in-law should scout them all—the more so as the acceptance of them was the correct thing among that class of people whom Mrs. Barnard called *nice*, and whom to resemble in all points was her constant aspiration. "It was so sad about poor Harry," she would say. "Oh what? has anything happened to him?" I once asked wickedly.

"Oh, no; nothing particular. I was thinking about his opinions."

"Ah!"

"It would be such a blessing, if Grace should be the means of bringing him to a better mind."

"His views are very extreme," I said; "but then he is so much better and nicer than anybody else."

"Yes, it is just that," answering the first part of my remark, and neglecting the rest; "they are *extreme*. It seems to me that he might do a little more like other people. For instance, I don't see why he should go about in a shooting-coat on Sunday."

"Perhaps if you asked him, he wouldn't mind giving up that," I suggested.

"I think I will try." And then, with some *naïveté*, she added, "On the whole, I think I would rather he had the opinions he has than that he had joined any of those vulgar dissenting people."

I think she was right. A son-in-law who preached in the open air and went to chapel would have been a good deal more distasteful to her than one who eschewed church and chapel with impartiality.

But sometimes Mrs. Barnard's self-pity would take a line that was too much for my patience. She would wonder how on earth they would get on without Grace, talking of her as if she were the mainspring, without which the whole machine must collapse, while the real mainspring sat by marking G. R. on cambric handkerchiefs with heroic industry.

It was a relief to both Madeline and me when the wedding-day was over; and, in the general dulness and reaction after the bustle of preparation, listlessness and languor needed neither explanation nor concealment. We were constantly together at this time, reading, walking, talking together; but we never talked on the one subject that was uppermost in the minds of both of us. With all her sweetness and gentleness there was a certain force about Madeline that made it impossible to disregard her imperative moods, and when she said, "We must never talk of this again, never—mind," I felt that she meant really never, and that not all our friendship would avail to win forgiveness for me if I should venture to set aside the injunction. I often felt it very hard when I saw the trouble in her face, and heard it in her voice, to be unable to make any sign of sympathy, and had it not been that she would often, by some mute token, show me that she had divined my feeling, I fear that I should not always have had strength to forbear.

Letters came from the bride and bridegroom telling of their delight in the beautiful lake scenery, of sunsets and sunrises, of walks and rows by moonlight—letters to the cottage full of Harry's goodness and wisdom, "so much beyond what anybody who was not married to him could possibly guess"—letters to the Dene setting forth all Grace's charm and loveliness—letters that were almost hymns of rapture and praise. And the letters were handed round the breakfast-table, and the mothers met and talked over their children, neither listening much to what the other said, nor caring much, so long as no one contradicted their praises of their own.

And then they came home; and I think that was the hardest time of all for Madeline—so hard that I cannot write of it.

CHAPTER VI.

I can never shrink
Back into bliss—my heart has grown too big
With things that might be.

SPANISH GYPSY.

THE woods at the Dene turned gold and brown in the bright September suns; the chill winds of October whistled through them, and the dry leaves, answering one by one to their call, detached themselves from the trees, and floated silently on to the moss carpet till its soft green was hidden away under a winter covering of russet brown. Then came November fogs, like a grey curtain that shuts out all warmth and sunlight, and bright December frosts bringing a glow of life and energy, and then the dark cold days of January and February, when last summer seems so far away that it is scarcely possible to recall to mind its warmth and beauty, and we lose faith in their return, till at last the dulness is broken by the rush of wild March winds sweeping across the downs and through the woods, like heralds who announce with blare and bluster the coming of a

king. And the tender buds peep through the bark to listen, and the snow-drops push up their heads through the frost-bound earth, and the prim-roses and the violets open their eyes, and all wait and watch for the coming of the summer.

And we, too, waited and watched with a pleasant passive expectation.

One afternoon of that sweet spring-time stands out with peculiar distinctness in my memory—one of those soft balmy days of early May, for the full enjoyment of which we must be in a purely passive state of mind. We must cease for a few hours to be busy and purpose-full. If we stay at home we must sit by the open window and give ourselves up to basking in the mellow sunlight; if we go abroad it must be only to stroll through the lanes and meadows. The man who wants an object for his walk is unfit for the enjoyment of spring. We must cast aside the burdensome sense of moral responsibility; we must decline all intellectual effort; we must disbelieve in any existence higher or better than that of a minnow in a sunny pool, or of turtle-doves cooing in the pinewoods—in short, if we would be in harmony with nature we must yield ourselves for the moment to the purest sensuous enjoyment. If we can comply with these conditions we shall find that such days, if not among the highest, are certainly among the sweetest of our lives.

On such days we soften towards one another, we are indulgent of weaknesses—indeed we rather like them and find it only difficult to tolerate persons of moral fibre so tough that it will not bend to the solicitations of the hour—persons who can read blue-books, solve mathematical problems, buy and sell on 'change—in short employ themselves as usefully as if the thermometer were at zero and they had breakfasted by gaslight.

On the afternoon of such a day as this we were sitting on the terrace at the Dene, Grace, as usual, being the central figure of the group. Grace was looking this evening even prettier than when we saw her last. Madeline had been right—happiness was very good for her; it added to her beauty the one thing that had perhaps been wanting to it before—a certain animated radiance. She wore a gown of some soft floating stuff of that peculiar dreamy blue that one seldom sees out of Sir Joshua's pictures, and a wide straw-hat with a bunch of wild flowers in it. The bright little flushes came into her cheeks with more than the old frequency, and there was a glow of deeper feeling in her eyes. It was pleasant to see her and Harry together: the little flirting ways, for which we had laughed at them during their courtship and their earlier married months, had given place, on his side, to a tender chivalrous protection, and, on hers, to a quiet loving trustfulness. There was something in their bearing towards one another that betrayed a common consciousness of a deepened seriousness and a growing responsibility in their life, by the side of which the little wiles and coquetry of the days when Harry lay at Grace's feet, and she played with his hair and called him her old dog, seemed puerile.

For above and beyond that general sense of expectation with which the air is laden in spring-time, those May-days were fraught for Grace with the deep personal hope that is the sweetest hope a woman's heart can know.

And Madeline was there too—not quite the old Madeline, with the laughing light in her eyes, and the heart that in its own entire singleness wondered how any one could live two lives at once, nor yet the Madeline of those sad days of July and August when the lesson she had deemed beyond her strength was being rapidly learnt under the terrible impulse of necessity. No, the Madeline who sat with us on the terrace this afternoon was not quite either of these. Her manner was quieter than it had been in the old days; she talked less, and when she talked her tones were more equable, though she could still be vehement at times. If any was rash enough in her hearing to sneer at aught that was good and true, to cast her heroes in the dust, or try to bring down to the level of his own wretched attainment her high standard of right and truth, then the old fire came back, her colour rose and her words came fast and thick, with a low nervous utterance and a profusion of gesture that are rare in the Anglo-Saxon race. But these outbursts were rare, for she was very little combative, and she shrank from discussing subjects on which she felt deeply with those to whom they were only an occasion for flippant epigram and cynical detraction. The impression she habitually gave was one of calm and repose. I have sometimes wondered that a girl who spoke so seldom of herself and her own personal interests should have escaped the imputation of reserve, but I suppose the explanation lay in the fact that she was ever ready to listen sympathisingly to the personal talk of others; for people in general do not become analytically critical of our manner, till we provoke them to it by our own egoism or dullness, and our reserve is measured not by the much we may be keeping back but by the little we give out. Madeline talked with ready interest on matters of general moment and entered into the private interests of her friends as fully as they could wish. Why then should people concern themselves to wonder what stores of serious thought and sacred experience she kept under jealous lock and key? It is true she sometimes seemed abstracted and would start as if from a dream when suddenly addressed, but then she was quickly attentive; and it is only the hopelessly unreasonable among us who insist on our friends' minds being always in the condition of blank paper on which we may write the first trivial remark that occurs to us, and who deem it a serious offence that they should be thinking of something else when we are just going to remark upon the weather or the colour of a gown.

George Henderson was with us, and I think he too had changed a little. He was a shade less dogmatic than he used to be—a shade more poetical; especially he was changed in his manner to Madeline, which was now full of solicitous deference, whereas, as we may remember, it had once been so arrogant and didactic as to provoke her almost to hatred.

And Mrs. Barnard was there with her crochet-work, listening with respectful appreciation to the enunciation of Sir Thomas's views on European politics, which were of a rather vague character, the most definite opinion he could bring himself to express being that "France was going to the dogs, and that perhaps if he had been a younger man ——" But as to what might have been expected in that case he never committed himself further than by a shrug of the shoulders and a meditative "Ah, well."

Mrs. Barnard's mind, when she was once satisfied that the medium in which she found herself was of a kind that warranted confidence—and of this she could have no doubt when it consisted of one of the best families of the county—was of an infinitely receptive and sympathetic quality. It was pleasant to her to agree, and she could agree very pleasantly. I know not how it was, but you might talk to her on a subject quite outside her range of thought, you might advance views upon it which she was entirely incapable of understanding, you might have a thorough intellectual assurance that you were leaving her far behind, and yet, with so perfect a tact, so admirably graduated an emphasis did she put questions and signify assent, that you must have been more than mortal if you could escape the flattering conviction that you had been fortunate enough to obtain a listener who was as superior to the ordinary run of her sex in discriminative power as she went beyond them in appreciation of yourself. I can conceive of no better treatment for a person suffering from morbid self-dissatisfaction than a week of Mrs. Barnard's society. And yet Mrs. Barnard was no humbug. She never pretended to be clever; she knew that she was not clever; and, knowing it, she had the wisdom to abstain from thinking for herself. She had picked up in the course of her life a sufficient amount of experience to save her from any very serious mistakes in the management of her affairs, and nature had endowed her with a delicate instinct as to social caste which enabled her, whenever it was her misfortune to find herself in the midst of conflicting creeds or standards, to pick out with little hesitation that which bore the stamp of the best society. But as moral philosophers have reminded us often, we can never entirely shift the burden of judgment from our own shoulders to those of other people, however deeply penetrated we may be with the conviction that those others are more equal to the task than we are. Be the keeper of our conscience a favourite confessor or the abstraction we call society, there will come moments into the lives of all of us when imperious circumstances demand a decision and give no time for consulting our oracle, and in these moments the man or woman who has abdicated the right of individual judgment will be sadly at sea. For instance, what could be more pitiable than the position of Mrs. Barnard when, as not seldom happened, she found herself compelled to listen to George Henderson's dissertations on political economy? It was not that she had a settled aversion to the new science, of the scope and meaning of which she had indeed a very dim conception, but her instinct told her that her nephew's

views were not the views of the best society. But then those views of the best society, what were they? They had never been reduced to any system, or if they had Mrs. Barnard had not so studied them; she knew them only as we know our casual acquaintance whom we easily identify in a crowd of strangers, but of whom we should be sorely puzzled to give such a description as would serve, should they ever happen to get lost and need arise to advertise for them in the second column of *The Times*. She was therefore as impotent to argue as she was unwilling to agree, and the consequence was that she got into a state of uneasy irritability, which I am inclined to think is not reckoned among the moods of the best society. But here on the terrace she could defy George Henderson and political economy, for was not Sir Thomas a baronet, whose lineal ancestors had come over with the Conqueror, whose acres were broad, and whose own uncle had been a bishop, and was not he politely submitting for her approval all the best sentiments, social, political and ecclesiastical? In the consciousness of this Mrs. Barnard was very happy. Lady Raymond always kept out of any political discussion that was not purely local in its bearing. Gifted with intelligence of a very superior order to her husband's, she had early arrived at a just estimate of his capacity in public questions, and having, happily, a sufficient sphere for the exercise of her mental activity provided for her in the management of her household and the administration of parochial affairs, she wisely kept out of a field in which she must have eclipsed her lord, and so disturbed the balance in the maintenance of which the harmony of their conjugal life was involved. Whatever mortification this self-abnegation entailed was amply compensated by the prospective pride she had in the career, nay, I should say the mission, to which she felt her son to be called; for Lady Raymond cherished in her secret heart a hope, strong as that of any mother in Israel, that the son of her bosom would be one day found in the van of the great army whose work is the reformation of the world. Of this hope, which was almost a religious belief, she never spoke in those days—never till the future to which she had looked had become a dreary might-have-been.

She was busy on this afternoon with domestic matters, and it was pretty to see how she would come in and out of the long windows to consult Harry's wife about all her arrangements. Certainly, Grace's partnership was a very nominal affair, but I think her mother-in-law would not have been less pleased to recognise it, had she cared to make it real by asserting her will and her opinion. Her love for Harry was of the large kind that casts out even the fear of rivalry, and the woman of his choice was to be her daughter and to be by her endowed with all the loving trust and all the privileges that are a daughter's due; not to be treated as an alien who is admitted to the house on sufferance, and against whom a barrier of pre-existent rights must be erected and guarded with a jealous care.

We drifted away from politics, and talked of the coming summer—planning picnics and excursions.

"I came down by a late train the other day," said George Henderson, "and as I walked through the woods by moonlight, it occurred to me what a delightful thing a moonlight picnic would be. That bit of open ground just by the lake would be a perfect spot for midnight revels."

"What a romantic idea!" cried I. "A perfect midsummer night's dream. But——"

"But what?"

"I am afraid my *but* was going to be of an uncomplimentary character."

"Then I can guess what it was. You were going to say—How came I to have a romantic inspiration?"

"You are right, and you must confess that there is something surprising in it."

"I am bound to agree with you, of course, though it is hardly fair to expect me to see the incongruity," said George, not quite pleased at being put out of the pale of romance.

"What incongruity?" asked Sir Thomas, who had an uncomfortable habit of being unconscious of general conversation till the tone of it became querulous, when he invariably roused himself, and asked to be put *au fait* of the discussion. "What incongruity? I missed that."

"The incongruity between Henderson and moonshine," said Harry.

"Ah, well! but that does not explain."

But nobody seemed inclined to offer a fuller explanation, and we were silent for a few minutes during which I began rather to repent of having snubbed poor George. I was beginning to suspect what was the source from which he drew his romantic inspirations, and what the explanation of his change of manner, and I feared that there was disappointment in store for him. I said therefore in a tone of apology:—

"I like the idea of a moonlight picnic; why should we not carry it out? What do you say, Grace?"

"I expect Grace says—What does Harry say?" said Lady Raymond, who had come out to consult us about some chintzes, "and if Harry is the wise man I take him for, he will say that moonlight picnics in the month of May are not to be thought of by sane people."

"Poor Henderson," said Harry, "there's a harder hit for you than Janet's."

"Not at all," said George, "for I quite agree with Lady Raymond: we must have a midsummer night for our revels."

"And act scenes from the *Midsummer Night's Dream* with all the tenants to look on," suggested Grace. "It is really a fascinating plan and shall certainly be carried out. Come, Harry dear, you need not look so forbiddingly wise about it."

"I am anxious not to fall into Henderson's error, and drift through romance into madness."

"I think it is just as good a way as the beaten track—through much learning," said Grace. "Tell us, now, what madness can there possibly

be in acting scenes from Shakspeare in the wood on a warm, lovely summer's night?"

"None whatever, if one could be sure that the night would be quite warm and lovely, and that one was oneself quite impervious to mist and dew, and that there is no harm in risking one's life for a foolish freak, and—and——"

And Harry looked into Grace's eyes, and Grace looked up at Harry, and blushed a deep rose-red, and said—

"I give in as usual, though I believe it is very bad for you that I should. Do you know, dear, I think I am a very demoralising wife for you? For I not only always let you have your own way, but I generally acknowledge that you are right."

"Then," said George, "it is clearly the duty of the rest of us to save Harry's character from further deterioration by never allowing him to have his own way, and continually declaring him to be in the wrong. So I propose that we get up our picnic in defiance of these wise married people."

But the picnic never was got up. Grace's defection and Harry's prudence acted as a wet blanket, and Madeline was in a dreamy mood, and had not taken part in the discussion. So the subject was allowed to drop.

"I used to think," said Grace, "that people did grow wise with being married, but I am sure it is not true of either Harry or me. No, dear, you need not protest; you have been growing more and more silly and idle ever since that evening when you said some very silly things under the cedar-tree; do you remember? And what is more, I, who was silly and idle enough already, have grown sillier and idler with you. So I believe it is all a delusion about people getting wiser when they marry. I believe marriage has a very bad effect upon one's mind. Don't you agree with me, Madeline?"

Madeline started as if from a dream, and Grace went on—

"Maddy, dear, you shouldn't be up in the clouds when we are discussing such grave subjects. I want you to tell Harry that being married has had a very bad effect upon him and me, and that it is bad generally for the race."

"In what way?" asked Madeline, making an effort to come out of her dream.

"In the way of making people silly and idle."

"I think Grace is stating part of a much wider proposition, which I am inclined to consider a true one—that any great personal happiness is bad for people," said George, rather sententiously.

We protested in chorus against this gloomy philosophy.

"Nevertheless, you may be right," said Madeline; "I have sometimes thought it myself; but I have come to the conclusion that even if it be true that happiness is demoralising, some people must submit to be spoilt for the good of the community; for if there were not a few very

happy people in the world, I don't know who would have courage to live at all."

"Then Grace and I may go on being happy," said Harry, "and have the pleasant consciousness that we are sacrificing ourselves for the common good."

"And nobody must ever reproach us for being silly and idle," said Grace. "I like this theory of Madeline's."

Then Lady Raymond came to the window again, and called to Harry and Grace to come in and judge of the effect of some curtains. She was very busy re-furnishing the rooms she had devoted to the use of the young couple.

We fell into an uncomfortable silence. Madeline had spoken with so much feeling that I felt it would be better to change the subject. But I could think of nothing to say, and we sat looking at one another. At last I said, merely to break the silence—

"I think one of the greatest absurdities in connection with marriage is the habit people have of treating married people as if they were older than unmarried people of the same age."

"They are certainly younger," said Madeline.

"In spite of household cares?" asked George.

"I never can see why people should talk as if only married people had cares," said I.

"As if household happiness were not as much a part of married life as household cares," said Madeline. "I got very tired of hearing people extol marriage in the abstract, while they make out that, in actual life, it is nothing but a tissue of petty worries."

"I expect worry averages much the same among married people as among the unmarried," said George.

"Of course it does." And then, with involuntary earnestness, Madeline added, "Only with married people the worries are easier to bear, because there are two backs to every burden." She checked herself abruptly. A sudden rush of feeling had made her speak with a warmth that was hardly judicious. She made some excuse about its getting late and the children's tea-time, and left us hurriedly. In a few seconds George Henderson bethought himself that a short walk would be pleasant before dinner, and I was left alone with Mrs. Barnard and Sir Thomas.

"What is the matter with Madeline?" said Mrs. Barnard; "and why did she go off in that sudden way?"

"She said it was tea-time, and she must go home to the children," said I.

"It wants half-an-hour to tea-time," said Mrs. Barnard; "she need not have hurried off in that way. I am going home myself in a few minutes, and we might have gone together."

"Well, but as your daughter has deserted you, won't you stay and dine with us?" said Sir Thomas, graciously.

I volunteered to take a message to the cottage, and Mrs. Barnard consented to remain.

"There is something odd about Madeline," said Mrs. Barnard: "I thought she was looking pale and languid while she was sitting here just now. I don't think she can be well. She reads too much at night."

"Ah, that's bad," said Sir Thomas; "it shatters the nerves. Bring her to my wife to be doctored, if she is not quite the right thing. Or send her to Brighton to be braced a little. Girls do get languid in the spring."

"I don't think Madeline is languid," I said, anxious to save her from transportation to Brighton. "She had a long walk this afternoon, and was perhaps a little tired after it; but she is very strong, and will be all right again to-morrow. I will go after her, and tell her that you are not coming home to tea."

I was glad of the message I had to bear, for I knew she would be thankful for a quiet evening. The constant effort to be cheerful was beginning to tell upon her health; and though I had said she was not languid, I could not conceal from myself that during these spring days her dreamy fits had been very frequent, and that there was almost constantly a look in her face that seemed to express the wish of David for wings like a dove that she might flee away and be at rest. It is hard when all outside voices speak of new life and hope and there is no answering hope within. My heart ached for her as I followed her through the shrubbery.

There were two parallel paths through the shrubbery, separated by a broad belt of American plants, either of which led to the cottage. I chose one at random. Before I had gone far along it, I heard a voice on the other side of the hedge which I quickly recognised as George Henderson's. He was pleading with Madeline.

"But you yourself said just now that burdens were lighter when there were two to carry them. Why not let me help you with yours. Madeline, I know you think that I am very hard and dry—all statistics and political economy. But I have a heart like other men, and I have loved you for a long time, Madeline. I saw how it was with you when no one else did, and I did not speak then, because I knew it would be useless. But now —. Madeline, I may not be Raymond's equal in most things, but I am better than him in this, that I know a pearl when I see one."

And Madeline answered, "It is useless. You are very good, and I—perhaps I am mad. But this cannot be. Oh, George, there are some burdens that *must* be borne alone. I am very sorry—very."

And they were silent for a moment. Then Madeline said humbly, "George, I think I have sometimes been unjust to you and unkind. I did not know—I never thought of this. Will you forgive me?"

And George answered, "Would to God that it could make any difference to you whether I forgive you or not!"

"But it does make a difference, if you would only believe it? I am very lonely, and it is much to me that my friends should be my friends still."

"Madeline, why will you not let me be your friend altogether? You are wasting your strength, your youth, your life on a dream; and you are too good to be wasted."

"Then I shall not be wasted. I am very sorry, George, but it cannot be. Good-by."

And without more words they parted. I heard George's footsteps going slowly back to the house, while Madeline went her way towards the cottage. About a hundred yards further on, the bank of rhododendrons ended, and the two narrow paths merged into a broad greensward. Here Madeline and I met. She gave a little start on seeing me.

"You must have overheard us," she said.

"Yes," I answered. "I suppose I ought to have stopped my ears and run away; but it never occurred to me that I was eavesdropping till I had heard all."

"There is no harm in your having heard," she said. "Poor George!"

"Poor George," I answered; and then I added, "But are you quite sure that you are right—that it would not be better——"

"Dear Janet," she said, "do not tease me about it. I am quite sure."

Then I gave my message, and we parted.

Poor George! We did not laugh at him again for some time; not till many years after, when he had found a nice, bright little girl who was willing to take half his burdens on her shoulders.

CHAPTER VII.

The breath of peace we drew,
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.

SHELLEY.

WHEN August came round again there was bustle and excitement at the Dene, for a great event had happened in the newly done-up bedroom. Behind the chintz curtains, over the colour of which we had been consulted that afternoon on the terrace, a new life had dawned.

It was considered necessary that Mrs. Barnard, whose experience in babies was to Lady Raymond's in the proportion of nine to one, should come and stay at the house, so a room close to Grace's was given up to her. There she established herself, with the medicine-chest out of which she had dosed her own children, from Grace down to Dora, and with a complete library of useful information on the subject of infant humanity. Sir Thomas and Lady Raymond called one another grandpapa and grand-mamma. The maid-servants went creaking about the house on tip-toe, with hot flannels and bowls of arrowroot; the neighbours called all day

long to leave cards, and hear the butler repeat complacently the old formula, that "the baby was doing very nicely, and Mrs. Raymond was as well as could be expected under the circumstances."

Then by-and-by a few old friends were taken up into the ante-room of the state chamber, and after a whispered consultation between the nurses and the grandmothers, a little blue-flannel bundle was brought in and handed about for inspection, till a faint wail would reach Grace's ears, and she would insist on having her little one brought back to her.

Then came the great day when Grace was pronounced strong enough to come down into the drawing-room, and Harry installed her in an easy-chair, and brought her cushions and footstools, and we said she looked like one of Sassoferrato's Madonnas, with the red shawl flung over her white muslin and blue ribbons.

"I am glad," Grace said, "for in that case I must be growing very calm and good," and she smiled up at Harry from the depths of her great grey eyes.

It was very pretty to see Grace with her baby. She did not worry us to admire it from morning to night; she did not chatter ungrammatical nonsense to it, or fuss about its frills or ribbons—the wonderful little human life seemed to her something too sacred to be insulted with such frivolous puerilities.

"It is so strange," she said to me one day, "having a baby of one's own. I don't think I ever realised before that babies were quite human beings. I used to look upon them as something between a doll and a lap dog—toys for grown people who had not left off wanting to play."

"I know you never liked babies," I said.

"I don't know that I 'like babies' now," she answered. "I don't think of little Harry much as a baby. I find myself always thinking of him as a man, and wondering what sort of man he will be. Oh, Janet, when one thinks that all the men and women in the world were once little babies like mine—pure, and innocent, and good—one wonders whether, if their mothers had only loved them enough, they could ever have grown up to be wicked. Oh, dear! one ought to be so wonderfully wise and good to be a mother, and I am not wise you know—not like you and Madeline."

"I think one is not very far from wisdom," said Lady Raymond, who had come in with Madeline while we were talking, "when one has a great sense of one's responsibilities, and a genuine fear that one may not be equal to them."

"And when one loves very much," added Madeline.

"Dear Madeline, I think you are the nicest philosopher in the world. Your receipt for growing wise is as pleasant as your theory about being happy for the good of other people. Now come and look at my boy and tell me if he has grown like his father yet."

And the bundle on Grace's lap was opened, and Madeline knelt down and kissed a little warm pink face.

"No; he is not like Harry yet," she said, "but I believe he will be when he begins to think and to have expression."

"But indeed he has expression, dear. I have been talking to him a great deal this morning, and he understands me very well. His blue eyes look quite wise."

"What did you talk to him about?"

"Ah, we have secrets, my boy and I," and Grace smiled in the old way that suggested a meaning beyond words. I used to think those smiles of Grace's were rather a take-in, getting her credit for more thought and poetry than was in her. But since her marriage, and above all since the birth of her child, I had discovered depths in her character of which I had not before suspected the existence.

I was glad to see that the birth of Grace's baby did much towards restoring Madeline's spirits. By creating a new interest for us all it threw into the background the event of the last year. We began to date from the birth-day instead of the wedding-day, and Harry and Grace in becoming father and mother ceased to be bride and bridegroom. The education of children usurped the important place in conversation that had been lately occupied by matrimony, and Madeline could join in the discussion of her little nephew's future without the painful effort it cost her to sympathise with her sister's happiness in the love she herself had missed.

Those were pleasant days for all of us—so pleasant that it seems to me, as I look back at them through the mist of tears that divides the then from now, that even had we known that they were numbered, and their number almost spent, we could not if we would have poured into them another drop of happiness—so rich were they in sympathy and friendship, so full of hope and love, and of quiet duty and contentment.

"I like these early autumn days," said Grace one evening, as we sat together on the terrace, as was our wont; "there is a sense of quiet and rest about them that does me good. It gives me a settled feeling that I can never have either in spring or summer."

"Spring is not a season," said Harry, "it is only a day."

"Yes," said Madeline, "it always seems to me that every year there is just one day when one says 'it is spring,' and all the world wakes up. Before that it has been all promise and expectation, and after it come east winds and disappointment." She was unintentionally sketching her own life.

"I don't like spring-time myself," said Harry. "There is a petulant tone about it that always reminds me of the egoism of very young people—boundless promise and desire, with very little stability. Everything is in extremes; the trees are too green, the sunshine is too yellow. There is no shade, and, except on my one day, no tenderness."

"But, surely, you must like April showers?" I said. "There is nothing more beautiful all the year round than the fresh young green, and the raindrops sparkling in the sunshine."

"They are pretty, but provoking; like the tempers of a spoilt child."

"And how about the real summer months?" said Lady Raymond, "June and July, when the roses are in bloom and the hay is being made, and the corn is just beginning to yellow, and the days are so long that one forgets for a little while how short life is. It is then that the promise of the spring is fulfilled, though in the long delay we have forgotten what it was we looked for, and we enjoy the beauty without remembering that we owe it to the winds and showers of the seed-time."

Then, after a pause, she continued: "This time is very beautiful; but then there is something sad about it. Those brown tints, for instance, that give such richness to the woods, mean that the leaves are already withering and will soon fall; already the corn is being cut down, and in a few weeks more all the warmth and beauty will be gone."

"Of course it is so," answered Grace. "One knows that this ripper beauty cannot last; but it has about it so much of rest and content, that it gives me a feeling of continuance and security. In the summer months there seems always a rush and bustle: one hurries from one beauty to another, and enjoys nothing: there is too much life—too much variety. The grass is long and rank, the trees are overloaded with foliage, the very sunshine is overwhelming, pouring floods of gold upon us with the ostentation of a millionaire. One grows weary with the ceaseless dust and glare."

"I believe," said Madeline, "paradoxical as it may seem, that after all the pleasures of autumn *are* more lasting than those of summer; one knows that there is nothing to come after, and so one makes the most of the present. It is the only time of the year when one looks, not forward, but back. One gathers in all the happiness of the year, and stores it up in one's heart for use in the future."

We lingered a little longer, drinking in the beauty of the evening. We lingered till a night-wind rustled among the trees, and we thought we felt a few drops of rain falling on our bare heads. The lovely day was over. Why could it not last for ever?

CHAPTER VIII.

Fools of nature,
So horribly to shake our dispositions
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls.

HAMLET.

It was very soon after the conversation related in the last chapter, that an event occurred which made a great change in the hitherto monotonous course of my life. My father was seized with paralysis one Sunday in the middle of his sermon. He was carried out of church insensible, and after lingering for a few weeks died without recovering his consciousness. It was found after his death that his affairs were involved, and that

though in a will made shortly after my mother's death he had left everything to me, his only daughter, my inheritance consisted mainly of debts.

I was thrown, therefore, penniless upon the world. I had no relations—no friends out of Endle Down. "Come and live with us at the Dene," Lady Raymond said; "I have room for another daughter." And I very gladly went, and stayed with them for several months, during which I had time to face the change in my lot; but I had no intention of living with them altogether. I was young and strong, and able as well as willing to work. So I looked about me for a place as governess, and when I had heard of one that was likely to suit me, I told Lady Raymond of it. Of course she would not at first hear of my going away, but I was firm, and at last obtained her consent, on condition of my giving a solemn promise that I would come back to her at once if I did not find myself happy. I did find myself very happy, for my employers were kind, pleasant people, and I grew fond of my pupil, an interesting little girl of seven, whom I was allowed to teach and train as entirely according to my discretion as if she had been my own child. It is not, however, my intention to tell in these pages the story of my own life, except in so far as it was bound up with the lives of Grace and Madeline. I pass on, therefore, to other events at Endle Down, which I think will be best told in the words of Madeline's letters. It was about a year after I had begun my new life that I received the following letter from her:—

"DEAREST JANET,—

"Endle Down, August 16, 18—.

"You must congratulate me—I have become a landed proprietor,—that is, I have entered upon all the duties and responsibilities of ownership of the Pitfield Cottages, and I have become in consequence an extremely busy and important person. But I must tell you how this has come about, or you will be fancying that the squire has died and left me this splendid property, in grateful acknowledgment of my impertinent suggestion that he should look to the condition of the dwellings, of which he pocketed the rents. No such luck has befallen the county. The squire still drinks port in the oak dining-room, and exercises his divine right of swearing at the labourers, and preserving the game on the Pitfield acres; he still snores approval of the doctrines of the church every Sunday in his fusty pew—in short, he still cumbars the ground he would be ashamed to till. You remember the bold step I took about writing to him eighteen months ago, and the agent's civil answer, 'that it so happened that on the very morning when my note came to hand he was consulting with builders and architects about the improvement of the dwelling-houses in which I was kind enough to take an interest, and that with the assurance that the matter should receive his most careful consideration, he remained my obedient servant, &c. &c.' Well, my obedient servant went on considering the matter for twelve whole months, during which I waited, first

patiently, and then impatiently, while the cottages got into worse and worse condition. I told the poor people of the agent's promise, and they laughed in my face. By-the-by, I think you did something of the sort: when I showed you his letter. So the damp went on soaking through the floors, the rain streamed in at the roofs, the atmosphere of the rooms grew fouler and fouler, as need of drainage became more urgent, and the wretched people grew, if possible, more listless, muddling, thriftless, and generally hopeless and unsatisfactory members of society than ever. For my part, I got so out of heart about them, that I almost gave up visiting them. However, at the end of a year I thought I would make one more venture. So I wrote again to the squire, and this time I got no answer, and there I think I should have left the matter, had it not happened that just about this time I fell in with Harry Raymond one day as I was on my way to see a poor woman who had lately been confined in one of the wretched huts.

"Don't ask me why I never consulted Harry about this business before. Of course he would have been the natural person to go to—oh dear! I sometimes think if more men were like him we women would fuss less, and keep in our places more, as people are always wishing we would. One does not care about doing other people's work when one sees it well done; but when people will not touch their own burdens with even so much as their little finger, it is difficult to resist an impulse to heave them out of the way, even if it does involve leaving the footpath and getting into the mud. As to my not speaking to Harry, I believe the fact is, that I have shrunk very much from contact with him ever since—you know when. But this accident has put us on our old easy footing again, and I am very thankful for it.

"I told him all about my letters to the squire, and he laughed a good deal at my simplicity. However, he did not *only* laugh at me, but took the subject up very warmly. He went over a good many of the houses with me, and was extremely indignant at their condition, declaring that something must be done at once, though what, would be matter for consideration. The next day he called on the agent, and ascertained at what price the squire, who is, as usual, rather hard up, would be willing to sell the houses. He then set to work to persuade his father that to purchase them would be, not only an act of philanthropy, but a good investment of a few hundred pounds. Accordingly, after what seemed to me a very long and elaborate negotiation, the cottages were bought and repairs begun. The draining business is deferred till the cooler weather, as the sanitary authorities declare that it is not safe to open drains while the thermometer is at 80° in the shade. So I am as impatient for September as any partridge-slayer in the county. In the meantime there is much papering, whitewashing, and new roofing going on, all which I, as vice-landlord, superintend—that is to say, I wander about among the workmen making suggestions, which are generally of such an unpractical nature that they are good only to be withdrawn.

"You know my weakness for all manner of forlorn hopes—sinking ships, incurable patients, graceless reprobates—anything, in fact, that has been given over, and the reform of which one may therefore undertake without fear of ignominy if one fails, and sure of admiration if one succeeds; and you can therefore picture to yourself my delight in the bad-as-can-be condition of my kingdom.

"But that is enough about the cottages. I have left myself hardly room to tell you how we are all doing. Fortunately all our healths may be described, shortly, as very good.

"Little Harry grows, of course, more delightful every day. He really is a dear little boy, and, now that he is beginning to talk, we are in a state of constant excitement over his last new word. As for Grace, she reads books on education from morning to night. Émile is her special study at this moment, and I believe she is already on the look-out for a Sophie for her son. It is a pity your little pupil is too old, or she would have done nicely. I suppose there is no prospect of a second?

"When are you coming to see us? We have so many things to show you and to tell you about, and you ought to have much to tell us. We are getting far away from one another, and already I find myself wondering whether such and such things are big enough to write to you about; for instance, whether you will care to hear that the honeysuckle on the porch has grown so much this summer that it peeps in at my bedroom window.

"Good-by, dearest.

"Ever your loving

"MADELINE."

Then for some time I did not hear again. I wrote two or three times, but my letters remained unanswered. At last a letter came.

"Endle Down, September 24, 18—.

"You must not be angry with me, dearest, for having treated you so badly. I have been very busy, and, just lately, not busy only, but anxious. Harry is ill—very seriously ill, I fear, though I believe I am the only one who is alarmed about him yet. For the last ten days he has been thoroughly unwell—sleeping very little at night, and constantly restless and uneasy. He declares it is only a bad cold, but the idea has taken possession of me that he may be sickening for typhoid fever, and I cannot shake it off. For the draining at Pitfield has been begun, and he was over there only a day or two before he complained of not feeling well. Of course I have not said anything to alarm Grace or Lady Raymond, but I feel very anxious and unhappy. Oh, Janet, if it is as I fear, and if what I cannot write of should happen, how I shall hate myself for having ever meddled with those cottages at all!

"Ever yours,

"MADELINE BARNARD."

Then a day or two later I received a hurried line:—

"DEAREST JANET,—

"It is as I feared. The doctor has just called, after seeing Harry, to tell us that it is typhoid fever. Poor Grace! Yours,

"M. B."

Three weeks passed, during which I heard nothing from Endle Down. Then I saw in *The Times* that Harry was dead. The next day Madeline wrote:—

"It is all over, Janet. Harry is dead, and it seems as if the world had stood still. Come to me, dearest, and let me talk to you, or I shall go mad. I cannot write about it. I dare not think of it, and yet I can think of nothing else. Everything seems impossible—to look back—to look forward—to live. Oh, Janet, I used sometimes to think that this would have been easier to bear than that other sorrow; but I know now that it is a thousand times worse. That was a tangible trouble that I could grapple with—a mountain that I could and did scale in time, seeing the sun rise on the other side; but this is a great blank—a negation of everything but the power of suffering.

"How do people ever get over great losses? It seems to me one can never again be free from fear—everything is shaken. But come to me and let me talk to you. Oh, Janet, you *must* come, for I am so haunted by death that while you are away from me I cannot believe that you are still alive.

"Your loving

"MADELINE."

"How selfish I am growing! I have said no word about the others. But what can I say? Everybody is broken-hearted. Lady Raymond sits for hours with her hands folded in her lap and her eyes fixed on them; now and then she takes up her knitting mechanically, and puts it down again as she remembers that they were socks for Harry that she was knitting. Grace is almost distracted at times, and at other times very calm, and, strange as it seems, quite cheerful. I do not understand her.

"Once more, dear, you must come. You will do us all good."

I wrote back, "I am coming," and I went the next day. As I got out of the train a footman from the Dene came up and told me that Lady Raymond had sent the brougham for me, and that Madeline was in it. I gave directions about my box and went down.

Madeline was leaning back in the carriage, with the old strained look in her face. Her greeting was very quiet.

"We will not talk now," she said. "I have told them to put us down by the stile, so that we may walk home, and I may have you a little to myself before you see the others. You are not too tired for a walk?"

I assured her that I was not, and we drove on in silence till we came to the woods; then the carriage stopped and we got out.

It was a quiet autumn evening, and the sun was setting, but not with the warmth and glory of that other evening when Madeline had been surprised by the unwonted beauty of the scene into a confession of the love that seemed akin to it. To-night the sun sank to rest sadly, wearily, as if the day's work had been unfruitful and disappointing, and it was well that it should be over. The purple and red lines in the sky stood out with crude distinctness—there was no harmonious blending of tints, no tenderness, no sense of a sympathetic presence; and the glassy surface of the lake reflected the harsh colours with unsoftened truth.

It was so impossible that that other evening should not be present to the minds of both of us, that when Madeline said—"It seems as if all my life had been lived between that evening and now," we neither of us felt that there was any need to say what evening.

We were silent again. By-and-by Madeline said—

"I come here very often—whenever I can get away, and I sit and think. How hopeless and sullen it looks."

"It is sullen now, but it will not always be so," I answered. "Summer will come back, and the world will grow green and fair again."

I broke down in my effort at commonplace consolation, for Madeline was looking at me in a wistful, wondering way, as if marvelling at my simplicity. I had spoken by rote: we all do sometimes. It is a bad habit, but one that we are hardly to be blamed for acquiring. We used to speak truth once—warm, living words fresh from our hearts, but the world would not have our true words. It cried out that we were abrupt and odd, and did not know its ways. So we set ourselves to learn its ways, and to use its dainty, mannerly phrases, that go softly, and never stick their elbows out. And meanwhile our true words have got lost, and now sometimes when we want them we cannot find them, and the smooth phrases come instead like hard, polished pebbles, or, if the true words come, we find they have grown hard too. And yet I think some one has said that it is not well to give stones for bread.

"Oh, yes," said Madeline bitterly, "the world will grow green and fair again, the flowers will come back, and the nightingales will sing in the woods, and we shall put away our black gowns and talk quietly about 'poor Harry,' and they will write on his gravestone things that he did not believe, and talk about meeting him in heaven, when all the while . . . Oh, Janet, I am saying horrid things, but it does seem such cruel mockery. You should not have told me that the summer will come again. Do you know, I have thought that when it does come again, I shall creep away here some evening when the sun is setting in a ruddy glow, and lie down upon the bank among the ferns and foxglove, and go to sleep in the warm sunshine, and then perhaps I shall glide quietly down into the water, and the ripples will go over me, and I shall be at rest again? The green world will do better without me, for my heart is very old and haggard, and there is a curse on me, I think, withering everything I touch."

"Madeline, you must not talk like this," I said.

"No, I know I must not; and that is why I want to go away out of the world, for I cannot talk like other people—I can only screech like a night-bird. The children ask me questions, and I dare not answer them, lest I should frighten them as I have frightened you."

"Do you ever pray?" I asked in a low voice, for Madeline was right, she had frightened me.

"I prayed last night," she said; "it was the first time for many years. I will tell you how it was. I could not sleep; my mind was very dreary, and I had been watching the stars from my bedroom window. Their calmness soothed me at first; but by-and-by it began to repel me. They seemed far-off and cold, and I turned away from them. Then I thought of all the sad hearts tossing restlessly about upon the earth; of the sin and the sorrow, and all the pain that no one ever hears of, and which is so much more terrible because it must be borne alone; and it seemed to me as if I heard the moan of all the world going up to the stars, and that the sound grew louder and louder, till it almost deafened me, but still the stars shone down with a bright cold light. And the moaning went on till it was like the noise of waves rushing over my head, and I felt as if I were drowning. Then I could bear it no longer, and I gave a cry, 'O God, have mercy!' But the worst came then, for the groaning changed into a wild laughter, and I heard it all round me, burst after burst, and, as it died away, I heard a voice crying in my ear, 'There is none to hear—none to hear!' I crept into bed and hid myself under the bedclothes, feeling as I remember sometimes to have felt when I was a little child, and I have spoken, thinking there was some one in the room, and have found it empty. One's voice comes back upon one with a hollow echo, that has something ghastly in it. But why should it be so horrible—this emptiness, this blank? Why should one be afraid of nothing?"

"Are you sure you were not dreaming?" I asked.

"I do not know, and it makes little difference. The voice haunts me, and the fact haunts me. I hear it now," and she shivered again.

"Madeline," I said, "why should you allow your faith to be shaken by fancies that come when you are worn out and ill."

"These doubts are not fancies," she answered, "and they have no come to me now for the first time. The unbelief is not new, but the horror is new, and I cannot throw it off."

I changed the subject, and asked after Grace.

"She is still in the strange state I described to you," Madeline answered; "but it puzzles me no longer as it did. She told me yesterday that often she cannot realise that Harry is dead, and that at these times she feels quite happy, and watches for him, expecting him to come in at every minute. You will see how eagerly she looks up every time the door opens."

"Her mind must be affected," I said.

"Of course her mind is affected," Madeline replied, with a touch of sarcasm; "but she is not mad, if you mean that. She is perfectly reasonable in everything; and she says that all the while she is looking out for him, she *knows* he cannot come, but that unless she is constantly repeating to herself that he is dead, she cannot realise it. I don't know that it ought to be difficult to us to understand her state of mind. There are a great many things which we know very well, and which we should never think of contradicting if we heard them asserted, but which we do not allow to influence our lives as we do the things of which we have *felt* the truth. And then don't you know what they say about people who have lost a limb and who go on trying to use it, stretching out the stump of an arm, from old habit, when they want to shake hands with a friend?"

"I suppose the cases are alike, but it had not struck me before," I said. "And perhaps it is best that she should not realise the loss all at once. Still it must be very pitiable."

"Oh, it is all pitiable—hopelessly pitiable," groaned Madeline. I did not attempt to offer comfort. I had none to give. Is it not one of the truths we must learn to recognise, that there will come into life moments of supreme anguish—sorrows that are as far beyond relief as the physical sufferings in the presence of which medical science has over and over again to confess its impotence—as incapable of present cure as those social ulcers which eat into the heart of our national life? And this is no gospel of despair; there are ills that can be cured, there are many more that can be alleviated, and there is work for all of us to do. But the millennium is not at hand, and it is not more idle to delude ourselves with rose-coloured theories about universal happiness to be secured by this or that political nostrum than to hanker after a religion or a philosophy that shall remove the sting from death while the curse of selfishness is still on life. There is such dearth of sympathy in the world—there are so few in whose light and goodness we can trust, that when one of these dies before his time, leaving us to tread alone the wine-press he has trodden with us, the world may well seem to us dark and empty for awhile. It is, perhaps, one of the greatest sins at our doors that we allow so many of our brothers and sisters to go hungry for human love, while we comfort ourselves with the sophism that they would never have been endowed with this strong yearning for sympathy if there was not One above who will satisfy it. We might as well tell the children starving in our streets that they would not be allowed to feel hungry if there were not manna from heaven for them to eat.

Then she talked to me of the strange loneliness she felt in this common sorrow—of the gulf of thought and experience unsuspected by all around her which seemed to cut her off from them, and of the effort it was to her to keep up the delusion under which they all were, that the loss was less to her than to his mother or his widow.

"Do not laugh at me," she said, "but I yearn so sometimes to be the one to be comforted and not the one to comfort, that I call old Rough

up into my room and talk to him about my sorrow." I did not feel much inclined to laugh at her.

"And yet," she continued, "it is not so much that I want to talk about my feelings, as that I want to feel that there is some one near me who would understand me if I did speak. Not one of them guesses how great this loss is to me, and, Janet, when I say that it is a loss, I do not mean that it is a loss to me in the same way that it is to Grace, or as I once thought it would be to me. It is not that. I have always been candid with you on this subject: I have confessed to you what I would confess to no one else; therefore you must believe me when I say that I have overcome that feeling—that it is dead and buried. But I have lost in Harry the one person I have ever known, with whose views and feelings I have felt such perfect sympathy wherever I could understand them, that I could trust him implicitly where I could not follow his thought. He was a living outward confirmation of all my inner life; he gave me a faith in myself that I can never have again. For there is no one now to bridge over for me the gaps in my knowledge and to encourage me when I am in despair. And I shall be in despair very often, only I shall not dare confess it because all around me—even you, Janet—will say that I am in despair because I *will* not seek comfort where alone it can be found."

Then I answered: "Madeline, I, at least, will never say that again. My own faith is very weak and uncertain, but I am weak myself, and I cannot do without it. I *dare* not face the great emptiness that you have found so horrible. It seems to me sometimes that we are on the same road, only that I advance more slowly than you do. Can we not walk together, leaning one on the other—comforting and being comforted in turn?"

I stayed a fortnight at the cottage, and during that time we had many talks together. On the last day of my visit we stood hand-in-hand by Harry's grave. There was as yet no stone upon it, and the few flowers that loving hands had planted, drooped sadly. As I looked round at the many other graves with white headstones on which were written hopes of resurrection and immortality, I could not refrain from envying the friends of those who rested beneath them. There are moments when we would gladly be rid of our sad heritage of truth and progress, when we long to close our eyes against the light and live again among the undisturbed illusions of our childhood. It is not only in the dark that one may feel frightened and alone.

Madeline was the first to speak.

"Janet," she said, "you have done me good. Since you have been with me my thoughts have been less horrid, and I no longer fear so much the summer coming back with the birds and flowers." She paused a moment, and then went on musingly: "I have been thinking a great deal about immortality; and somehow it seems to me that our friends do not quite die till we forget them. They are about us in some strange way, like a holy influence keeping us purer and calmer than we could be with-

out them. It is only 'he useless, loveless lives that end in the grave; lives like Harry's are carried far on into the future by all who have known their goodness and their beauty."

"I do not think I quite understand you," I answered.

"And I do not know that I quite understand myself; but it will come clear by-and-by. I often think one's thoughts clear themselves best as one goes about one's work."

"But," I asked, "does this kind of immortality satisfy you?"

"One cannot be satisfied all at once," she answered; "but I believe it will in time."

"It is so misty—so unreal," I said. "I do not think it would ever satisfy me. I want something surer; and yet Madeline, you are stronger than I am."

"If I am at all strong," she answered, "it is you who, in great part, have made me so. Since you have been with me I have ceased to feel the blank that was so terrible. I have learned that there is no blank where there is human sympathy. It is only isolation that is intolerable."

"But when I am gone and you are alone again, what will you do and what shall I do, for I shall be alone too? How is one to be guarded against isolation?"

"It ought not to be difficult," said Madeline. "Seeing that we live surrounded by crowds of fellow-creatures with much the same needs as ourselves, I think the wonder is that isolation should be possible at all."

"But if our fellow-creatures will not give us sympathy?"

"Then we must sympathise with them. When we feel that the alternative is to cry out for help and find there is none to hear, to beat our heads against a dead wall, to strain our eyes and yet never pierce the blank fog that surrounds us, I think we shall find some means of reaching the human hearts that are near us. Surely when we know we have nothing more than human help to look to, we shall cling more closely to one another as orphaned children do.—Oh, Janet, why talk of isolation? Is not this communion? Are we not three—you and I and Harry?"

As she said Harry's name her voice sank to a low whisper, and I felt a strange thrill pass through me as though a current of enthusiasm had flowed from her to me through our linked hands. I could not answer, but it seemed to me that I prayed and that once more Madeline's passion was lifting me above myself.

After a moment's pause she went on. "And if isolation should come, ought we to shrink from it? Has not every faith had its martyrs? We are not likely to be tried by stakes and gibbets, but may it not well be 'hat while in a spiritual solitude our convictions will be put to the strongest proof, it is there also that we shall best learn how great is man's need of the communion in which we believe?"

I left Endle Down the next day with confident anticipations of coming again soon and often. Nevertheless, it was five years before I saw Madeline again.

CHAPTER IX.

The essence of all beauty, I call love.

E. B. BROWNING.

It was five years before I saw her again, for soon after that visit my little-pupil, whose health had always been delicate, grew so rapidly weaker and more ailing, that her father and mother were strongly urged by the physicians they consulted to take her abroad before the winter began. Fortunately, they were wealthy and free from those professional and business ties which make the search for health an impossibility to so many invalids. They tried one climate after another—the South of France, Rome, Madeira, and finally Egypt, and there, finding that in the warm, dry atmosphere the little girl grew stronger, we pitched our tent.

During the years of my absence I kept up a regular correspondence with Madeline. And from her letters I learned how by degrees the dark shadow that had fallen across her path had been dispelled; how the blank had been filled up by new interests and new work, and how all her life was ever more and more clearly illumined by the light of which we had watched the dawn together on that evening when we stood hand-in-hand by Harry's grave. She told me too, how Grace, rousing herself from the terrible lethargy into which she had sunk—as she awoke from the illusions that had made her loss bearable in the days of its first freshness—had made a piteous appeal to her to help her with all her love and all her wisdom to bring up Harry's boy as Harry would himself have trained him, and how the common sorrow had proved a bond knitting them into a closer sisterhood than had been possible for the merely natural tie of blood between natures so diverse. "She came to me," Madeline had written, "one day in the library. I was reading a book that had belonged to Harry, and she recognised it as his. I do not know whether she had come in with the intention of asking what she did ask, or whether it was suggested to her by seeing me studying Harry's book. But she took my hand in hers and knelt by my side and said, 'Madeline, you must help me to live and to teach little Harry to live. When I think of him, I am in despair. It seemed easy enough to bring him up to be wise and good when I had Harry to help me. But now I am all at sea. I am very ignorant, and when I try to learn, I am bewildered with the quantity of things there are to be learned, and by all the different opinions about them. No two books agree. How am I to choose among them all? And yet I must choose, or how shall I teach my child. But I think if you would help me—you who think as Harry thought, and who are so wise and clever—then, I think, between us we might train him so that if—oh, Madeline, for who can say that it is impossible?—if Harry can see and know what we are doing, he will be glad and approve.'

"I have told you what she said, word for word, because I have sometimes thought that you do not do justice to Grace. You do not know—

nobody can know who has not been constantly with her during the last two years—all her sweetness and goodness. When she was so happy that it would have been no wonder if she had been entirely self-absorbed, she was full of kind thought for others, and now in her sorrow she is so brave in her quiet, gentle way, never bemoaning herself, but trying to do her duty, and to bear what seems unbearable. And then there is something very touching about her humility, and her trustfulness—indeed, it makes me feel quite ashamed when she appeals to me as so much wiser than herself, to me who am myself so pitifully ignorant. But it is very pleasant to me that she should wish to work with me, though it must be as a fellow learner and not as a pupil. And so we are making great plans about all that we will learn and read together, that we may be able to teach little Harry as he grows older." I am afraid it was not without a pang of jealousy that I read this letter. Madeline was the one person in the world who had ever seemed to want me very much. With all but her I had been accustomed to feel myself an outsider—one to whom people were kind, but whom they could do well enough without. And now I feared that she, in this close communion with her sister, would also learn to do without me, and that when I saw her again I should find her life had grown complete, and that there would be no corner in it left for me. She would still be kind to me, she would still be interested in all that touched me, but she would never say again, "Janet, you have done me good; there is no blank now." But her letters were as frequent as ever, as affectionate and unreserved, and I grew reassured.

Still, when I found myself once more on my way to Endle Down, I could not help the old doubt coming back, and as I drove from the station I found myself growing nervous and shy, as I never could have believed I could have felt at the prospect of seeing again the Barnards and the Raymonds. Suddenly the carriage stopped. I was at the lodge. My heart beat fast, and my eyes grew dim as I drove up the avenue and all the past rushed over me. I looked out. Yes, there they were, watching for me under the trees. Grace, with a little fair-haired boy clinging to her skirts and laughing and talking eagerly, and Madeline, all sunshine and content, holding out both her hands and saying, "Oh, Janet, Janet, we have wanted you so much." Then there is much hand-pressing and kissing, and many broken exclamations, questions and answers, as we try to squeeze into five minutes the events and feelings of five years. There is no need to doubt my welcome. Indeed there is not time for it.

Madeline has kept me well informed of all that has happened, but as I stand again on the dear old terrace the five years seem blotted out, and my mind is a strange jumble of then and now. I know that Sir Thomas is gone, and that the little boy before me is called Sir Harry Raymond. I know that Lady Raymond has become infirm, and seldom leaves her sofa, except to be drawn about in a Bath chair. But how can I realise it? How, above all, if it were not for Grace's black dress and widow's cap, could I believe that he who was the light and life of the house will not

come soon and stretch out both his hands in kindly welcome? Is it all a dream?

Then Madeline says, "You must come in and see the mothers," and we go into the house—little Harry running before us and bursting open the drawing-room door to announce that Janet has come. Dear old lady Raymond, she is lying on the sofa, and knitting grey socks as of old, only they are *little* socks now for *little* Harry; but the knitting falls from her hands as I come in, and she spreads out her arms to welcome me. The tears come into her eyes, and she cannot speak. The past is present to her too, and she can only press me to her lovingly. It is almost a relief to hear Mrs. Barnard's quiet, ladylike voice saying how glad she is to see me again. One lives to be thankful that there are some people in the world whose feelings are not too deep for calmness and propriety. Life were otherwise too intense to last out even the short span allotted to it.

Mrs. Barnard helps us to talk. She asks the right questions about Egypt—about the inundations and the climate, the pyramids and the sphinxes—she wonders whether I shall know the younger children, and whether I have heard of Jack's scholarship at Eton, and of all the little family incidents that fill up the years I have been away—whether Madeline has told me of George Henderson's marriage, and whether I shall like his wife. And while she talks, things disentangle themselves in my mind, and I feel less afraid of asking wrong questions.

"Come into the garden, Janet," Madeline says after a while; "there is time for a stroll before dinner."

We go out through the open window, across the sun-lit lawn into the quiet shrubbery. And, as we wander arm-in-arm among the trees, Madeline tells me, bit by bit, over again, all the story of her life since last we were together.

The sun is going down in a golden glory, the air is laden with the scent of roses, the haymakers are busy in the field turning over the swathes of fresh green grass, there is an atmosphere around us of richness and content, and I am not afraid as I look into Madeline's eyes to ask if she is quite happy.

"Indeed I am," she answers; "how happy it will take me a long time to tell you, for my life is very full." And then drawing me closer to her, she adds very sweetly, "But not so full, dear, that there is not room for you in it."

We linger a little longer among the roses and the flower-beds, till we see Grace coming across the lawn to summon us to dinner. She is leading little Harry by the hand, and as she bends down to talk to him, she seems to me like the guardian angels the old painters loved to paint, for her white cap glistens like an aureole, and the sunlight, falling on her black drapery, has made a radiance of its gloom.

And Madeline says, as we watch her coming:

"Confess now that there is some good in being very beautiful."

"When did I ever say that there was not?" I answer.

"You never said it, but in the old days I used to think that you never quite forgave Grace for being beautiful."

And I answer: "I could not forgive her for being *only* beautiful and leaving all the work to you."

"You did not know," said Madeline, "how much easier it was to do the work when she made an atmosphere of beauty in the house."

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We hear much in these days of the power of beauty to purify our lives, of art as the great lever that is to lift us to the far-off heights on which we hope to realise our ideals; and now and then we hear austere voices crying to us that this is no time for lingering in pleasant places, that we must toil on without resting, content that through our efforts, others will sooner reach the goal. All honour to the brave spirits who can keep ever before them the glory of the far-off hill-tops, in whom faith in the ideal burns with so steady a flame that they need not to rekindle it by contact with actual beauties by the wayside. All honour to these, but to most of us the hill-sides seem very steep, and our faith is weak and our sight short, and so let thanks be given for our goodly company of artists—poets, painters and musicians—who, if they cannot give us mighty harmonies like those which found an echo in the hearts of more harmonious times, do at least give us tuneful melodies which are as fragments of the complete beauty after which we yearn—and, above all, let there be thanks for every gentle life in which we may see our ideal shadowed forth. The hill-tops are very far away, far away from us who have climbed many days to reach them, far away from the sheltered valleys where our little ones are playing. Far, and yet not so far from there, while the valleys are still watered by pleasant singing streams and silent lakes; for the children, as they bend over them to see their own smiles and tears reflected in the waters, may find that the hill-tops are there too. But, alas, there are other streams that fret and fume so that the reflection is a broken and unmeaning picture, and there are pools so foul and muddy that the children, looking into them, see only a distorted image of themselves. By-and-by the children must leave the valleys, and begin to scale the mountain sides; whether they have courage to climb on till they reach the hill-tops, or indeed, whether they know that there are any hill-tops to be reached at all, will depend, I think, not a little on how much they have learnt to love them while they yet lie mirrored at their feet.

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